







THE
History of Chivalry
or
Knighthood and its times.
By

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

Vol. II.



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THE
HISTORY
OF
CHIVALRY.

CHAP. I.

STATE OF CHIVALRY IN ENGLAND DURING THE
REIGN OF EDWARD THE THIRD.

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CHAP. I. **T**HE sun of English chivalry reached its meridian in the reign of Edward III., for the King and the nobles all were knightly, and the image of their character was reflected in the minds of the people.* Tournaments and jousts, for the amusement and in honour of the ladies, were the universal fashion of the time. In little more than one year, chivalric solemnities were held with unparalleled magnificence at Litchfield, Bury, Guildford, Eltham, Canterbury, and twice at

Tourna-
ments.

* Warton (History of English Poetry, vol. i. p. 118. note, 8vo.) notices a passage in *Piers Plowman*, which shows how the reigning passion for chivalry infected the ideas and expressions of the writers of this period. The poet is describing the crucifixion, and speaking of the person who pierced our Saviour's side with a spear. This person our author calls *a knight*, and says, that he came forth *with his spear in hand and justed with Jesus*. Afterwards, for doing so base an act as that of wounding a dead body, he is pronounced a disgrace to *knighthood*, and our *champion chevalier chyese knight* is ordered to yield himself recreant. fol. 88. b. So, too, in the *Morte d'Arthur*, Joseph of Arimathea is called the gentle knight that took down Jesus from the cross.

Windsor. * The gay character of Edward and CHAP. I.
his court was pleasingly displayed in the spring
of the year 1359, three years after the battle of
Poitiers. A solemn tournament of three days'
duration was proclaimed in London, and the
lord mayor, sheriffs, and aldermen, proposed to
keep the field against all comers. The time ar-
rived, the martial games were held, and all the
honor of arms appeared to be of right due to
the officers of the city. The victors then threw
aside their shields and surcoats impressed with the
city's bearings, removed their beavers, and King
Edward, the Black Prince, the Princes Lionel,
John, and Edmund, and nineteen noble barons,
were recognised. †

The round table at Kenilworth already men- The round
table.
tioned was not a solitary instance of the love of
romantic grandeur and gallantry among the
people of England. Mortimer kept a round
table of knights in Wales professedly in imita-
tion of Arthur. ‡ And afterwards Edward III.
endeavoured to realise the golden imaginations
of fable which had assigned one hundred and
fifty knights as the complement of Arthur's chi-
valry. § We are assured that the round table

* Warton, vol. ii. p. 86. † Barnes's Edward III., p. 564.

‡ Leland, Collect. vol. ii. p. 476.

§ Arthur went to his mete with many other kings. And
there were all the knights of the Round Table except those

CHAP. I. which Edward established at Windsor in 1344 described a circumference of six hundred feet : but it is more interesting to know, that the nobility and knighthood of France, Germany, Spain, and other countries flocked to England on the invitation of the King, and that the chivalric bands at Windsor were graced by the presence of Queen Philippa and three hundred English ladies, who, in honour of the friendly union of knights, were all arrayed in splendid dresses of one form and fashion, and looked like the sisters of a military order. Policy was mixed with chivalric pride in Edward's plan ; for he wished to retain in his service some of the foreign knights who repaired to the tournament at Windsor. But his intention to strengthen his chivalry was defeated by his rival Philip of Valois, who established also a round table, to which the cavaliers of the Continent could more easily repair than to that of Edward. * The knights of France were expressly forbidden by their king to attend the

that were prisoners, or slain at a reconter, thenne at the high feast evermore they should be fulfilled the hole nombre of an hundred and fifty, for then was the Round Table fully accomplished. *Morte d'Arthur*. The tale of Sir Gauth of Orkeney, c. 1. And see Vol. I. of this work, page 376.

* Walsingham, sub anno 1344. Ashmole on the Order of the Garter, cap. v. s. 2.

festivities of the round table at Windsor. The CHAP. I.
 English monarch found, too, that he could not secure the attachment of stranger knights. That great chivalric principle, the companionship in weal or woe of men forming one society, was never regarded by them. Edward's table at Windsor was surrounded by gay cavaliers, who talked and sang of war and love, and then merrily returned to their own country full of courtesy to their royal host for his gallant bearing, but not disposed to renounce the chivalric associations of their native land. Edward then changed his design, and wished to establish an order of merit, that so "true nobility, after long and hazardous adventures, should not enviously be deprived of that honour, which it hath really deserved, and that active and hardy youth might not want a spur in the profession of virtue, which is to be esteemed glorious and eternal." * He accordingly assembled the nobility and knight-
Order of
the Garter.
 hood of his realm, and showed them his intention of forming an especial brotherhood of knights, to be called Knights of the blue Garter, and of ordaining that a feast should be kept yearly at Windsor, on Saint George's day. The barons and cavaliers of England joyously agreed to his pleasure; for they were animated by this en-

* Preface to the Black Book of the Order of the Garter.

CHAP. I. couragement to military feats, and they saw that great amity and love would grow and increase among them. Twenty-five of the most valiant men of the kingdom were then chosen. *

The most noble order of Saint George, named the Garter, had, therefore, its origin in romance, in the wish to restore the chivalric dignity and splendour of ancient Britain. That view was afterwards blended with objects of policy which also were soon abandoned, and a fraternity of companions in arms was established for the promotion of chivalric honour. But though gallantry did not, as is commonly thought, actually found the order, yet perhaps it caused the union to receive the last clause of its title. Froissart describes the passion of Edward for the Countess of Salisbury, but is altogether silent on the story of her garter, a silence decisive of the incorrectness of the vulgar tale; for Froissart was intimately acquainted with the court of the English king, and his attention was always awake to circumstances of a gallant and romantic nature. It was quite in the spirit of those days for a band to be regarded as an excellent symbol of the friendly union which ought to exist between the knights companions; and if love had not been a chief feature in chivalry, the order might have been only called the Order of the Band. But

* Walsingham, p. 164. Froissart, c. 100.

gallantry came in, and claimed some share of chivalric honours. Ages of fastidious delicacy would have thought of a zone or girdle, but our simple minded ancestors regarded the garter as the wished for symbol. The well known motto of the Garter (*Honi soit qui mal y pense*) seems to apply, as Sir Walter Scott conjectures, to the misrepresentations which the French monarch might throw out respecting the order of the Garter, as he had already done concerning the festival of the round table. *

* Supplement to the Encyclopædia Britannica, vol. iii. part 1. p. 139. As the story of Lady Salisbury's garter is fabulous, we must resort to some other conjectures for an explanation of the famous motto of the order, and the one cited in the text is extremely ingenious and plausible. With much less appearance of truth, Ashmole fancies that Edward by this motto retorted shame and defiance upon him that should dare to think ill of so just an enterprise as he had undertaken for the recovery of his lawful right to the French crown (whose arms he had lately assumed); and that the magnanimity of those knights whom he had chosen into this order was such as would enable him to maintain that quarrel against all who durst think ill of it. Ashmole's Order of the Garter, p. 184. There never was a knight more fond of impresses, mottoes, and devices, than King Edward III. He not only stamped them upon his own armour and that of his horse, but on his apparel, beds, and household furniture. "It is as it is," was one of these mottoes. Another was: —

"Ha! ha! the white swan,
By God's soul I am thy man."

CHAP. I.

On the collar of the order something should be said. Warton appears to think that the earliest collar worn by the knights of the Garter was a duplication of the letter S, in allusion to the initial letter of the fair lady's name who, he supposes, gave rise to the fraternity of the most noble order of the Garter. But in truth no evidence exists that originally the members of the order wore any collar at all as knights of the Garter, though they certainly wore golden collars in their character of knights bachelors and knights banneret.

The favourite badge of the Lancastrian family was the letter S. sometimes single, and sometimes double, and the golden collar of esses became in time the general collar of English knights, and the silver collar of esses was worn by squires. The letter S. was the initial letter of the sentence, "*Sovereign vous de moy.*" This was a very favourite motto in the fourteenth century, and was afterwards frequently introduced into collars which were formed of the fleur-de-souvenance, the forget-me-not of modern times. Whether at any period the golden collar of esses distinguished the knights of the Garter we know not. The collar worn in the present days, composed of garters with the image of Saint George dependent thereon, cannot be traced higher than the reign of Henry VIII.

The order was founded in honour of God, the Virgin Mary, Saint George the Martyr, and Saint Edward, king and confessor. The two saints were regarded as the particular patrons of the knights companions. The person that our ancestors understood by the name Saint George is a point of doubt. Some modern writers have called him a sufferer in the persecutions of Diocletian, and others the flagitious George of Cappadocia, the Arian successor of Athanasius in the archbishoprick of Alexandria.* It is equally difficult to discover how the saint became invested with military glory. But, leaving such questions to martyrologists and legend-makers, it is sufficient for our purpose to observe that a person called Saint George was in very early ages regarded as the tutelary saint of England, and became therefore very naturally one of the heads of the new military order. His brother-pro-

* Gibbon is the chief supporter of the last hypothesis. In his text (vol. iv. c. 23.) he states positively, that "the infamous George of Cappadocia has been transformed into the renowned St. George of England, the patron of arms, of chivalry, and the Garter." In a note, however, he observes that this transformation is not given as absolutely certain, but as extremely probable. Few people read this note, and, perhaps, Gibbon did not intend they should. He wished to strike their attention by the sentence in his text, and he satisfied his conscience for literary honesty by writing the modification at the bottom of the page.

CHAP. I. tector Saint Edward soon fell from his lofty station : but at the time concerning which I am writing he was high in fame, for Edward III. was wont to invoke both him and the other patron-saint with perfect impartiality; and when he was cutting his way through a press of knights, one stroke of his sword was accompanied by the exclamation, "Ha, Saint Edward," and another by the cry, "Ha, Saint George."

Courtesy of
Edward.

To pursue, however, the general course of the chivalry of our Edward III. Nothing could be more beautiful than his courtesy on all occasions. It was particularly shown in his treatment of the hostages of the French king for the due performance of the treaty of Bretigny. He commanded his officers to deport themselves to those lords and their company courteously and favourably; and, accordingly, the French strangers sported without peril in London at their pleasure, and the great lords went hunting and hawking, and rode over the country, and visited ladies and damsels, without any control, so courteous and amiable was the King of England to them.* During all the tournaments that were held in his reign, he permitted his French, Scotch, and other prisoners, to share in the games, and sometimes he even

* Froissart, c. 213.

furnished them with tourneying harness out of the royal armoury. * CHAP. I.

The taste for chivalry among classes of people apparently little susceptible of its influence may be learned from the masquerading tournament of Edward; for knightly games must have been well known to the citizens of London, or the proclamation would not have been issued, that the lord mayor, aided by the court of aldermen and the sheriffs, would, on a certain day, hold a solemn tournament. The same taste was proved some years before, when the Black Prince entered London, with King John of France as his prisoner. The outsides of the houses were covered with hangings, wrought over with battles in tapestry, and the citizens exposed, in their shops, windows, and balconies, an incredible quantity of bows and arrows, shields, helmets, corselets, breast and back pieces, coats of mail, gauntlets, umbraces, swords, spears, battle-axes, armour for horses, and other armour.† It is also curious to notice, that on the evening preceding Candlemas-day, in the year 1377, one hundred and thirty citizens of London, for the entertainment of the young prince, Richard, son of the nation's idol, the Black Prince, rode, disguised

Prevalence
of chivalric
taste among
all classes.

* Barnes, p. 444.

† Knyghton. Chron. col. 2615.

CHAP. I. as knights, from Newgate to Kennington, where the court resided, attended with an innumerable multitude, bearing waxen torches, and playing various instruments of music.*

As the principal wars of Edward's time were waged with a chivalric people, the circumstances which surrounded them favoured the developement of the chivalric qualities of the English character. I shall not repeat the political events of our glorious contests with France, nor describe, for the thousandth time, the battles of Cressy and Poitiers : but it may be mentioned, that the admirable marshalling of Edward's force on the field of Cressy was a high proof of his chivalric sageness, and mainly contributed to his victory over the forces of the King of France.

English
archers.

The battles of Cressy and Poitiers, however, were not entirely gained by the chivalry of England: the bow was a most important weapon in the English army. It had characterised the Normans, and been mainly instrumental in winning for them the battle of Hastings. It was afterwards used by the small landholder, the tenant in soccage, and the general mass of the people, while the lance was the weapon of the lord and the knight. The bow was the emblem of freedom, and the

* Stow's Chronicle.

pre-eminence of our archers shows that the political condition of England was superior, in the fourteenth century, to that of any continental nation. * CHAP. I.

The arrow was of the remarkable length of a cloth-yard. The expression in the old ballad of Chevy-Chase,

• “ An arrow of a cloth-yard long
Up to the head drew he,”

marks the usage of our early ancestors; and that sentence of Lear, in Shakspeare's play, “ Draw me a clothier's yard,” shows that in the sixteenth century the national character had not been lost. It was fostered by every proper means: by royal command archery was practised in towns on holidays, after church; while

* ———“ these gallant yeomen,
England's peculiar and appropriate sons,
Known in no other land. Each boasts his hearth
And field as free as the best lord his barony,
Owing subjection to no human vassalage,
Save to their king and law. Hence are they resolute,
Leading the van on every day of battle,
As men who know the blessings they defend.
Hence are they frank and generous in peace,
As men who have their portion in its plenty.
No other kingdom shows such worth and happiness
Veil'd in such low estate.”—

Halidon Hill, act ii. sc. 2.

CHAP. I. coits, cock-fighting, and amusements with the ball, were strictly prohibited. Other nations drew the bow with strength of arm, but Englishmen with their whole vigour: they laid their body in the bow *, as an old writer has forcibly expressed the usage; and when in amusement they were exercising their skill, eleven-score yards was the least distance at which the mark was set up. No one could better shoot an arrow than a yeoman in the days of Edward III.: they were the most powerful attendants which our knights could boast of.

“ A yeoman had he, and servants no mo,
 At that time, for him lust to ride so;
 And he was clad in coat and hood of green.
 A sheaf of peacocks’ arwes bright and keen
 Under his belt he bare full thriftily.
 Well coude he dress his takel yemanly.
 His arwes drooped not with feathers lowe,
 And in his hand he bare a mighty bowe.
 A not-hed † had he with a brown visage,
 Of wood-craft coude he well all the usage.
 Upon his arm he bare a gay bracer,
 And by his side a sword and a bokeler;
 And on that other side a gay dagger,

* This national characteristic is alluded to in Latimer’s sermons, folio 69:—a work not of very good promise for such matters.

† Hair cut short.

Harnessed well, and sharp as point of spere ;
 A Cristofere on his breast of silver shene ;
 An horn he bare, the baudrick was of green.
 A forster was he, soothly as I guess." *

CHAP. I.

The reader scarcely needs to be informed that the loss of the battle of Cressy by the French began with the confusion among the Genoese cross-bow men. The English archers then stepped forth one pace, and, as Froissart says, let fly their arrows so wholly, and so thick, that it seemed snow was piercing through heads, arms, and breasts. The French cavaliers rushed in to slay the Genoese for their cowardice, but the sharp arrows of the English slew them, and their horses too. The chivalry of the Black Prince decided the victory : the Earls of Flanders and Alençon broke through his archers, but deeper they could not penetrate ; and in the personal conflict of the chivalries of the two nations, the English were conquerors. †

At the battle of Poitiers the English archers threw the French cavalry into confusion, by slaying the unmailed horses. True to say, as Froissart observes, the archers did their company that day great advantage ; for when the

* Chaucer, Prologue to the Canterbury Tales, line 101, &c. &c.

† Froissart, c. 131.

CHAP. I. Black Prince descended the hill on which he had posted himself, the archers were mingled with his chivalry, in true knightly fashion, and shot so closely together, that none durst come within danger. *

The Black Prince.

The well-known conduct of the Black Prince to his prisoner, King John, after the battle, — his waiting on him at table, saying that he was not sufficient to sit at the board with so great a man as the King, — his riding through London to the Savoy, the French monarch mounted on a white and superbly-equipped war-horse, while the Prince rode by his side on a little black palfrey, — all this beautiful deportment proceeded from the modesty, the self-abasement of true chivalry, and from that kindly consideration which one knight always showed to his brother in arms. *

There were many circumstances in Edward's wars amply deserving of notice, as illustrative of national and personal character, but which have been passed over altogether, or but slightly regarded, by the general historians of England; some of whom, in their anxiety for chronological exactness, and others in their desire to make the matter in hand merely illustrative of a few political principles, have very ingeniously con-

* Froissart, c. 163.

† Ibid. cc. 168. 174.

trived to strip their subject of all its splendor, interest, and variety. CHAP. I.

Three years after the battle of Cressy had given the town of Calais to the English, the Lord Geffray Charney, of France, endeavoured to regain it, by bribing the governor, Amery de Puy, a Lombard. Edward, hearing of the treaty, sent for his officer from Calais to Westminster. When the King saw him, he took him apart, and said, "Thou knowest well I have given thee in keeping the thing in the world I love best next my wife and children, namely, the town and castle of Calais; and thou hast sold it to the Frenchmen; wherefore thou deservest to die."

Story of the king's chivalry.

Then the Lombard kneeled down, and said, "Noble King, I cry you mercy: it is true what you say; but, Sir, the bargain may well be broken, for as yet I have received never a penny."

The King, who had warmly loved the governor, replied, "Amery, I will that thou goest forward in thy bargain, and the day that thou appointest to deliver the town, let me have knowledge thereof before; and on this condition I forgive thee thy trespass."

Accordingly Amery returned to Calais, and continued the negotiation with Lord Geffray Charney. It was finally agreed between them

CHAP. I. that the surrender of Calais should take place on the night of the new year; and the governor, faithful to his allegiance, communicated the progress of the plot to Edward. The King immediately rode from London to Dover, with three hundred men-at-arms, and six hundred archers, and, crossing the sea, he reached Calais in the evening, and secretly lodged his men in the chambers and towers of the castle. He did not wish to head the emprise himself; and selecting Sir Walter Manny from his gallant band, as the prowdest chevalier, he told him that he and his son, the Prince, would fight under his banner.

When the time for surrendering Calais approached, the Lord Geffray, having heard from Amery that matters were ripe, advanced from Arras, and sent before him twelve knights, and an hundred men-at-arms, to take possession of the castle. Amery admitted them over the bridge of the postern, receiving, at the same time, a bag containing twenty thousand crowns, the price of his treachery. He led the soldiers towards the donjon of the castle; and immediately King Edward and an hundred men, with swords and axes, furiously poured from it, shouting the war-cry, "Manny, Manny, to the rescue!" The Frenchmen were panic-struck by this wild sweep of war, and incontinently yielded themselves pri-

soners. Edward advanced to the Boulogne gate, where he found the Lord Geffray, who was anxiously expecting it to be opened; and his companions were driving away the tedious moments, by supposing that Amery, like a subtle and suspicious Lombard, was busy in counting his crowns. CHAP. I.

The cry, "Manny to the rescue!" disturbed their jocularity, and grasping their swords they saw a band of armed men issuing from the gate. In an instant the King, the Black Prince, the Staffords, the Suffolks, the Salisburys, the Beauchamps, the Berkeleys, all the pride and flower of English chivalry stood before them. The Frenchmen did not decline the combat; and it was chivalrously maintained till a winter's return of morn. The English were finally victors. Of the single combats in which the cavaliers signalled their valiancy, the fiercest occurred between the King and the Lord Eustace of Rybamount, a strong and hardy knight. Twice was Edward struck on his knees; but at last Eustace was worsted; and he yielded his sword to the King, saying, not knowing his royal quality, "Sir Knight, I yield me your prisoner."

The King treated his captives like brethren in arms, giving them a noble entertainment, and sitting at the table with them, while the Prince, the lords, and the knights of England, acted as

CHAP. I. attendants. After supper, and when the tables were removed, the King talked a while with his own knights, and then conversed with the Frenchmen. He gently reproved the Lord Geffray of Charney for an enterprise so unworthy of nobility and knighthood; and then going to Sir Eustace of Rybamont, he said to him, with all the fine frank joyousness of chivalry, "Sir Eustace, you are the knight in the world that I have seen most valiantly assail his enemies and defend himself; and I have never found a knight that ever gave me so much ado body to body as you have done this day, and therefore I give you the prize above all the knights of my own court." The King thereupon took from his head a chaplet of pearls, fair, goodly, and rich, and presented it to the knight, with the remark, "Sir Eustace, I give you this chaplet, for the best doer in arms this day of either party, and I desire you to wear it this year for the love of me. I know that you are fresh and amorous, and oftentimes among ladies and damsels. Say where-soever you go that I gave it you; and I free you from prison, and renounce your ransom. Tomorrow, if it so please you, you shall depart."*

* Froissart, cc. 150. 152. "Messire Eustace vous estes le chevalier au monde, que veisse oncques plus vaillamment assailer ses ennemis, ne son corps deffendre: ny ne me trouvay oncques en bataille ou je veisse, qui tant me

Here chivalry appeared in all its generousness, elegance, and refinement. How beautifully contrasted is Edward's deportment to Sir Eustace de Rybamont with his feelings towards Eustace de St. Pierre and his five fellow-burgesses, three years before, at the surrender of Calais to the English. Edward had no sympathy with their magnanimous devotion of themselves to save the lives of their fellow-citizens; no consideration of knightly mercy softened his mind; and it was only the supplication of his queen, who was in a state to move the sternest soul to grant her wishes, that restored his better nature. Before Edward's chivalry, however, be generally and finally condemned, let it be remembered that his severe losses of his own men had sorely

donnast affaire, corps à corps, que vous avez huy fait. Si vous en donne le pris, et aussi sur tous les chevaliers de ma cour, par droit sentence. Adonc print le roy son chappelet, qu'il portoit sur son chef (qui estoit bon et riche) et le meit sur le chef de Monseigneur Eustace; et dit Monseigneur Eustace, je vous donne ce chappelet pour le mieux combattant de la jouence, de ceux de dedans et de dehors: et vous pui que vous le portez ceste année pour l'amour de moi. Je say bien que vous estes gai et amoureux, et que volontiers vous vous trouvez entre dames et damoiselles. Si dites, par tout la ou vous irez, que je le vous ay donné. Si vous quitte vostre prison, et vous en pouvez partir demain, s'il vous plaist.

CHAP. I. grieved his mind against the people of Calais, and that at the commencement of the siege, when the captain of the town had driven from its gates all the poor and impotent, Edward not only granted them a free passage through his army, but gave them meat and drink and money.*

England
regarded as
the seat of
honor.

The court of the English king was regarded as the very judgment-seat of honour; an opinion of which a very curious proof exists. In the year 1350, a fierce war raged between the Soldan of Babylon and Constantine, King of Armenia; the former invading the dominions of the Armenian prince with vast and numerous armies, and the latter endeavouring, by the united strength of his own subjects, and the Cypriots and Rhodians, to repel the violence of the heathen invaders, or at least to arrest their progress, which then began to threaten all Christendom. Among the many great men who, together with the Christian princes, were engaged in this holy war, were a Cypriot knight named John de Visconti, a relation of the King of Cyprus, and a knight of France called Thomas de la Marche, bastard-brother to John de Valois, the French king. Both these knights held high commands in the

* Froissart, cc. 133. 146.

Christian army. From certain information, or from jealousy, John de Visconti charged the bastard of France with treason; with having agreed, in consideration of a certain sum of gold to be paid unto him beforehand, in part of a greater sum to be paid afterwards, to betray the Christian army to the Turk. Thomas de la Marche, with all the confidence of virtue, boldly denied the charge; it was repeated, and again flung back in the accuser's face; opprobrious epithets were interchanged, and a challenge to mortal combat was given and accepted. The friends of the two knights, dreading the displeasure of the King of Cyprus and the King of France, and fearing that the consequences of a duel might be felt among themselves, compelled John de Visconti and Thomas de la Marche to agree to stand to the award which should be determined by the confederates in council. The judgment was, that they should carry letters importing their cause fully and clearly from the said Christian princes unto King Edward of England, and to submit themselves to be tried by combat before him, as the most worthy and honorable prince in all Christendom; they swearing to remain as perfect friends until that time.

Soon afterwards, they set sail for England, where they arrived in the beginning of September, and forthwith presented unto King Edward,

CHAP. I. in the names of the kings of Armenia and Cyprus and the rest of the princes and captains of the Christians, their letters, which contained a narrative of the whole dispute, and the conclusion, that the matter should be determined by combat before him as their judge. In the presence of the King and his court, Sir John de Visconti accused Sir Thomas de la Marche of his treasonable intent and purpose, challenging to prove it upon his body, and thereupon flinging down his gauntlet. Sir Thomas boldly took it up, and accepted the challenge in proof of his innocency. King Edward having read the letters, and seriously considered the whole matter, appointed a day for the decision of their quarrel in close field within the lists at his palace of Westminster.

On the day appointed they met accordingly, armed at all points, on horseback, the King, the Prince of Wales, and the whole court of England being spectators. Presently, upon sound of trumpet, a most gallant combat commenced between the two stranger knights. Both their spears were broken into splinters upon each other's shield, yet neither of them was cast from his saddle. Instantaneously, and, as it were, by mutual consent, they alighted, and drawing their good swords, renewed the combat on foot, till having with equal valour and discretion fought a considerable while, both their weapons became useless, and they were obliged to come

to close grapple, and at length by wrestling both fell locked together, still contending for the victory. It was gained by Sir Thomas de la Marche, by means which, though lawful in the duel, would not have been permitted in the courtly joust and tournament. He had armed the joints of his gauntlet with sharp pricks of steel called gadlings, and he struck them with such force and frequency through the small distant bars of his antagonist's visor, that Visconti was compelled to call for mercy. The King thereupon threw down his warder, the marshal cried Ho! and the combat ceased. Edward adjudged the victory to the Frenchman, declaring that the vanquished was at his mercy, agreeably to the laws of arms.*

The court of Edward and his son was as chivalric as that of Arthur, and of much more interesting contemplation, from the pleasure of finding that the beauties of the chivalric character were not imaginary. If the Round Table boasted its Sir Tristram and its Sir Launcelot of the Lake, the order of the Garter possessed its Sir Walter Manny and its Sir John Chandos, whose lives were so brilliant and glorious that the golden age of chivalry seems not like the golden age of nations, a poet's dream.

Chivalric
heroes of
Edward's
time.

* Barnes's History of Edward III. p. 452, &c.

CHAP. I.

The gestes
and prow-
esses of
Sir Walter
Manny.

In the suite of Philippa, daughter of the Count of Hainault, when in the year 1327 she came to England to be married to Edward III., was a gentleman of baronial rank, named Walter of Manny *; and it was not thought that he lost any quality of his birth by serving at her table as her carver.† He had been educated as a

* There was a Lord of Manny, as well as Sir Walter, at Edward's court. The lord was a distinguished person, for he was among the bishops, earls, and barons, who accompanied Edward to France, upon his doing homage for the duchy of Guienne. St. Palaye has confounded the lord and the knight, and made but one of them. He overlooked the hundred and second chapter of Froissart, wherein the baron and the knight are separately and distinctly mentioned. There was also another Manny, called the courageous Manny. He was knighted by Sir Eustace Dambreticourt before a battle, and after fighting most valiantly he was left for dead in the field. Froissart shall tell the remainder of the story. "After this discomfiture, and that all the Frenchmen were departed, the courageous Manny being sore hurt and near dead, lift up his head a little, and saw nothing about him but dead men lying on the ground round about him. Then he rose as well as he might, and sat down, and saw well how he was not far from the fortress of Nogent, which was English; then he did so much, sometimes creeping, sometimes resting, that he came to the foot of the tower of Nogent; then he made tokens to them within, showing how he was one of their companions; then certain came down the tower to him, and bare him into the fortress, and dressed his wounds, and there he governed himself so well that he was healed." Froissart, c. 199.

† Froissart, c. 19.

cavalier, and his military accomplishments were soon noticed by Edward. * He was knighted, and the ceremony was splendid, the dresses being selected from the royal wardrobe. † When the chance of a war with France was freely talked of in London, and every man's mind was filled with hopes of honor, Sir Walter vowed before dames and lords of the court, that he would be the first knight to enter the enemy's territory ‡, and win either town or castle, and do some deeds of arms. He then went to Flanders, and on the defiances being declared between the French and English nations, he got together about forty spears, and, by riding through Brabant night and day, he soon reached Hainault. Mortaigne was, he heard, in the realm of France; and passing with the utmost speed through the wood of Blaton, he arrived at the wished for town before the sun arose, and by good chance he found the wicket of the gate open. Leaving a few of his company to keep the entrance, he went into the high street with his pennon before him, and reached the castle.

Chivalric
vow of Sir
Walter.

* Froissart, cc. 24. 26.

† Appendix, No. xxiv., to Anstis's History of the Knighthood of the Bath.

‡ "Mais il dit à aucuns de ses plus privés, qu'il avoit promis en Angleterre devant les dames et seigneurs, qu'il seroit le premier qui entreroit en France, et prendroit chastle ou forte ville, et y feroit aucunes appertises d'armes, c. 36.

CHAP. I. He was then espied by the watch, who blew his horn, and shouted "Treason, treason!" It would have been the extreme of rashness for such a little troop as that of Sir Walter to have attempted to storm the castle. They therefore contented themselves with setting fire to some houses, and then quitted the town; and thus that noble and gentle knight Sir Walter Manny performed the vow which he had made to the dames and lords of England. *

He fights
for the love
of his lady.

Afterwards, (in the year 1342,) being high in favour with Edward, he was sent into Brittany, with a proud display of knights and archers, to aid the Countess of Mountfort, at that time besieged in her castle by the French. He was not long before he made a sally on the enemy, and with such effect, that he destroyed all their great engines of assault. The French knights, not anticipating so bold a measure, lay at some distance from their machines; but they soon advanced in formidable numbers. The English and Bretons retreated, however, fairly and easily, though the French pursued them with infuriate violence. It would not have been knightly for Sir Walter to have left the field without having right valiantly acquitted himself; and he exclaimed, "Let me never be

* Froissart, c. 36.

beloved by my lady, unless I have a course with one of these followers.* He then set his spear in its rest, and so did many of his companions. They ran at the first comers. Then legs were seen turned upwards, knights were taken and rescued, and many rare deeds of arms were done by both parties. Afterwards the English slowly retired to the castle, and the French to their tents.†

CHAP. I.

Sir Walter, in all his measures of succour to the Countess of Brittany, showed himself one of the prowtest knights of the age; but no act of his valor was so interesting as his rescue of two brother-knights, whom an uncourteous cavalier, called Sir Loyes of Spain, had condemned to death.‡ Sir Walter said to his companions, “It would be great honor for us if we could deliver out of danger yonder two knights; and even if we should fail when we put it in adventure, yet King Edward, our master, will thank us, and so will all other noble men. At least, it shall be said, how we did our utmost. A man should peril his body to save the lives of two such valiant knights.”

His rescue
of two
brother-
knights.

* Quand Messire Gautier veit ce, il dit, j'amaiz ne soye salué de madame et chere amie, se je réntre en chastel n'en forteresse, jusques à tant que j'aye l'un de ces venans verse. Froissart, c. 82.

† Froissart, c. 82.

‡ See Vol. I. p. 151.

CHAP. I.

So generous an emprise was willingly undertaken : the greatest part of his force attacked the enemy's camp, while Sir Walter himself, with a chosen band, went round to the quarter where, by the custom of war, the prisoners were kept. He found there the two knights, and he immediately set them upon good steeds, which he had brought with him for their use, and, shaking them by the hand, he made them gallop to a place of safety. * — The object of his expedition into France, namely, the succour of the Countess of Montfort, being accomplished †, Sir Walter recrossed the seas, and went to London.

In the year 1344 he was dispatched into Gascony with the Earl of Derby and Lancaster, the Earl of Pembroke, and other noble peers of England, as one of the marshals of the host. Manny inspired and directed every enterprise. From the reports of his spies regarding Bergerac, he thought the place was pregnable. Being one day at dinner with the Earl of Derby, he exclaimed, with a cup of rich Gascon wine in his hand, “ If we were good men-of-arms, we should drink this evening with the French lords in Bergerac.” This bold and manly sentiment was loudly applauded by his brother-

Instance of
his joyous
adventur-
ousness.

* Froissart, c. 87.

† Vol. i. p. 246. ante.

knights : tables and benches were overthrown in their haste to quit the hall and don their harness, and in a few moments they bestrode their noble steeds. The Earl of Derby was right joyous at the sight of the gallant assemblage, and crying, " Let us ride to our enemies in the name of God and Saint George," banners were displayed, and the English cavaliers urged their horses to speed. They soon reached the fortress of Bergerac. The pleasant wish of Sir Walter was not realised ; for night closed upon the combatants, without their drinking the wines of Gascony together. All the next day was spent, likewise, in manœuvres, and in jousts *d'outrance*, and in the evening the French men-at-arms stole away from Bergerac. The common people sent their submissions to the Earl of Derby, who saying, " He that mercy desireth mercy ought to have," made them swear faith and homage to the King of England. *

No circumstance in this war was of more importance than the relief of the castle of Auber-
oche, then beleaguered by the French. The Earl of Derby had with him only three hundred

His gal-
lantry be-
fore Aube-
roche.

* Froissart, c. 103. Le Comte D'Erby dit, Qui merci prie merci doit avoir. This sentence, I suppose has escaped the notice of writers who have represented the sole amusement of knights to have consisted in cutting the throats of common people.

CHAP. I. spears, and six hundred archers, the rest of his force being dispersed over the country. The French could count about ten or twelve thousand; but the English, undismayed by numbers, thought it was a great disgrace to abandon their friends in Auberoche. The Earl of Derby and his knights were then in a wood, two little leagues from Auberoche; and while waiting for the Earl of Pembroke, they left their horses to pasture.

While they were loitering in the fields, in this state of restlessness, Sir Walter Manny said to his companions, "Let us leap on our horses, and wend our way under the covert of this wood till we arrive at the side which joins the Frenchmen's host; and then let us put our spurs into our horses, and cry our cries. Our enemy will then be at supper, and, not expecting us, you shall see them so discomfited, that they shall not be able to preserve any array." A scheme so adventurous was readily embraced: every man mounted his horse; and the troop coasted the wood till they came near the French, who were going to supper, and some, indeed, were already seated at the tables. The scene of festivity was broken up when the English displayed their banners and pennons, and dashed their spurs into their horses, and raising the cry, "A Derby, a Derby!" rushed among them, overthrow-

ing tents and pavilions. When the French recovered from their astonishment, they mounted their steeds, and rode into the field in military array ; but there they found the English archers ready to receive them, and those bold yeomen shot so fiercely that they slew many men and horses. On the other side of the castle there was a noble display of French chivalry ; and the Englishmen, having overcome those who were near the tents, dashed boldly among them. Many noble deeds of arms were done, knights were taken and rescued, and the English cause triumphed ; for the knights of the castle had armed themselves, and now issued forth, and rushed into the thickest of the press. Then the Englishmen entered into Auberoche ; and the Earl of Derby gave a supper to the earls and viscounts who were prisoners, and to many of the knights and squires, lauding God, at the same time, that a thousand of his own nation had overcome many thousands of their enemies, and had rescued the town of Auberoche, and saved their companions that were within, who, in all likelihood, would have been taken within two days.

The next morning, at sunrise, the Earl of Pembroke reached the castle with his company of three hundred spears, and four thousand archers ; and his personal chivalry was mortified that so fine a deed of knighthood had been

CHAP. I. done without him ; and he said to the Earl of Derby, " Certainly, cousin, you have shown me great uncourtesy to fight with our enemies without me. You sent for me, and might have been sure I would not fail to come."

" Fair cousin," quoth the Earl of Derby, " we greatly desired to have had you with us : we tarried all day till it was far past noon, and when we saw that you did not come, we did not dare to abide any longer ; for if our enemies had known of our coming, they would have had great advantage over us, but now we have the advantage over them." The Earl of Pembroke was well contented with this fair reply, and gallantly fought with his brother noble during the remainder of the war.*

His filial
piety.

We need not describe Sir Walter's feats of arms before La Reole, besieged by the Earl of Derby ; but when the town surrendered, a little circumstance occurred beautifully illustrative of the character of our knight. His father had been murdered near that place, as he was making a pilgrimage to the shrine of St. James, in Spain, and had been buried in a little chapel in the field which then was without the town of La Reole, but was inclosed within the walls when the Earl of Derby conquered it. Sir Walter enquired if

* Froissart, c. 107.

there was any one who could show him his father's tomb, offering an hundred crowns for his knowlege and labour. A man, grey and bent with age, went to the knight and declared, "Sir, I think I can bring you near the place where your father was buried." Manny then, in his joy at the promise, answered, "If your words be true, I will keep covenant, and more."

The townsman led him to the place of sepulture; and they found a little tomb of marble which the servants of the deceased pilgrim had respectfully lain over him. The old man, pointing to it, exclaimed, "Sir, under that tomb lies your father." Then the Lord of Manny read the scripture on the tomb, which was in Latin*; and finding that his guide had declared the truth, he gave him his reward. He afterwards caused the bones of his father to be taken up, and removed to Valenciennes, in the county of Hainault. There his obsequies were right sacredly performed: the helmet, the sword, the gauntlet, the spurs, and

* This is Lord Berners' rendering of the passage. The phrase "par un sien clerc" had crept into some editions of Froissart; and Mr. Johnes's translation is, "Sir Walter caused the inscription to be read to him by a clerk." This, perhaps, was necessary, as the inscription was in Latin, for heroes have not been famous for their clerkship. But the inference which some writers have drawn, that he could not read at all, is perfectly unwarrantable.

CHAP. I. the tabard, were hung over his grave, and as long as the family of Manny lived in that country, sad and solemn priests yearly chanted masses for his soul. *

Sir Walter so manfully defended the castle of Aguillon, that the Duke of Normandy was compelled to raise the siege. The battle of Cressy had just been fought, and our knight was anxious to visit his sovereign, Edward. He fell into communication with a cavalier of Normandy, who was his prisoner, and demanded of him what money he would pay for his ransom. The knight answered, he would gladly give three thousand crowns.

“ Well,” quoth Sir Walter, “ I surely know that you are a kinsman to the Duke of Normandy, and so warmly beloved by him, that, were I to press you, I wot in sooth he would gladly pay ten thousand crowns ; but I shall deal otherwise with you. You shall go to the Duke, your lord, upon your faith and promise, and get a safe-conduct for myself and twenty of my companions to ride through France to Calais, paying courteously for all our expences ; and if you can procure this from the Duke, or the King, I will willingly remit your ransom, for I greatly desire to see the King my master. If you cannot do

Story of
chivalric
manners.

* Froissart, c. 110.

this, return hither in a month, and consider CHAP. I.
yourself as my prisoner."

The knight was well contented, and went to Paris to the Duke, his lord ; and having obtained the passport, he returned with it to Sir Walter, who acquitted him of his ransom. Manny commenced his journey, and proceeded safely till he reached Orleans, where he was seized by the officers of the King of France and taken to Paris.

This circumstance was reported to the Duke of Normandy, who went to the King, his father, and entreated him, for the honour of chivalry, to release Sir Walter. He was for a long while inexorable, for he wished to destroy him whom he called his greatest foe ; but, at last, good counsel prevailed with him, and Manny was delivered out of prison. He dined with the French monarch, who deported himself with knightly generosity. He entertained the Englishman right nobly, and gave him a distinguished seat on the dais. He also presented to him jewels to the value of a thousand florins ; which Sir Walter received, only upon the condition of having liberty to return them, if his master, the King of England, did not approve of his retaining them ; and the French king declared that he spoke like a noble knight.

CHAP. I.

Sir Walter then recommenced his journey, and soon reached Calais. Edward welcomed him; but when he heard of the presents, he said, "Sir Walter, you have hitherto truly served us, and shall continue to do so, we trust. Return the gifts to King Philip; you have no cause to keep them: thank God! we have enough for ourselves and for you; and we intend to do much good to you for the service you have rendered us."

Sir Walter immediately gave those jewels to a cousin of his, named Sir Mansac, and said, "Ride into France, to the King, and commend me to him, and say, that I thank him a thousand times for his gift; but as it is not the pleasure of the King my master that I should keep it, I send it to him again."

Sir Mansac, therefore, rode to Paris, and had his royal audience. The King would not accept the jewels, but pressed them upon the knight, who, less conscientious than his cousin, thanked His Grace, and was not disposed to say nay.*

Sir Walter remained with his sovereign during the memorable siege of Calais; and when the inhabitants proposed to capitulate, it was his counsel that swayed with Edward to offer mercy to the town, on the surrender of six of its chief bur-

The gentle
disposition
of Manny.

* Froissart, c. 135.

guesses, instead of requiring general submission. CHAP. I.
 Though Eustace de St. Pierre and his noble companions were saved by the tears and entreaties of Philippa, yet it was that gentle knight, Sir Walter Manny, who first endeavoured to turn aside the fierce wrath of the King. "Noble Sir," said he, "refrain your courage. You have the reputation of nobleness; therefore do not any thing that can blemish your renown. Every man will say it is great cruelty to put to death such honest persons, who, from their own noble feelings, to save their companions, have placed themselves in your power." *

Sir Walter lost nothing of Edward's consideration by this contradiction of his humour. But he continued in such favour, that he was permitted to marry a lady related to the royal family†: he was invested with the Garter; and was summoned to parliament among the barons of England, from the twenty-first to the forty-fourth year of Edward's reign.‡ He was among the English lords who signed the treaty of Bretigny in the year 1360; and I regret that he was one of Edward's council who advised the sending of

His importance at Edward's court.

* Froissart, c. 146.

† She was the Lady Margaret, daughter and heiress of Thomas Plantagenet, surnamed of Brotherton, Earl of Norfolk, and uncle to Edward III.

‡ Dugdale.

CHAP. I. succours to the Black Prince, when he was about to assist Peter the Cruel. It is more pleasing to contemplate our cavalier on the battle-plain than in the hall of deliberation. He was, to the height, a sage and imaginative soldier; skilful as well as brave in battle.

His remark-
able se-
gacity.

When the war between England and France was renewed, in the year 1369, the Duke of Lancaster (late Earl of Derby) prevented the Duke of Burgundy's descent upon the English shores, by landing a small army at Calais, and ravaging the country near Boulogne. The Duke of Burgundy commanded the heights of Tournhem: the English were in the neighbourhood, and a battle was daily expected. It was feared, rather than desired, by the English; for their handful of men were opposed by more than four thousand French knights. The Duke of Burgundy could not engage without the King's permission; but the policy of Charles forbade a battle, and the Duke then desired leave to retire: the King consented. One night, fires were lighted, and there was an unwonted stir amidst the French camp. Such of the English as were near it were roused from sleep. They awoke the Lord Robert Namur, who immediately armed himself, and, preceded by a man bearing his banner, went to the tent of the Duke of Lancaster, who had been already disturbed. The

English lords, one by one, drew about the Duke, ranging themselves, from the force of habit, fair and softly in battle-order, without any noise or light, and placing the archers in such a form as to be ready to receive an attack by the French. No attack was, however, made; and, after waiting two hours, the Duke consulted with his lords. It was the sage opinion of Manny that the French had fled, and he advised Lancaster to pursue them. But the Duke declined this course; for he said he never could believe that so many valiant men-of-arms and noble knights would so shamefully depart. As soon as morning arose, it was discovered, however, that the French camp was deserted; and the Duke of Lancaster repented that he had not followed the counsel of his experienced friend.

Such was Sir Walter Manny; gallant, hardy, adventurous, and sage. Something still was wanting to the beautiful perfection of his character; for courtesy to the ladies, and bravery and skill in the field, did not of themselves constitute the preux chevalier. Liberality was the graceful ornament of the knightly character; and the charitable annals of the city of London place this crown on the brow of our noble representative of English chivalry.

His liber-
ality.

During a plague in England, in the year 1348, London and its vicinity were the chief places of

CHAP. I. suffering ; and as no church-yard could contain the victims, the Bishop of London bought a piece of ground called *No Man's Land* *, and consecrated it for burials. In the next year, Sir Walter Manny materially added to the charities of the bishop ; for he purchased, and caused to be consecrated to the same object, thirteen acres and one rod of ground adjoining to *No Man's Land*, and lying in a place called *Spittle Croft*, because it belonged to *St. Bartholomew's* hospital. In the very year of the purchase, the purpose seemed accomplished, for (according to certain charters of *Edward III.* and an inscription on the cross remaining in *Stow's* time,) fifty thousand people were buried there. Sir Walter built a chapel in the cemetery ; and, in the year 1371, he founded an house of *Carthusian* monks, by the appellation of the *Salutation of the Mother of God*, to advance charity, and administer the consolations of religion. †

* The reader may, reasonably enough, enquire who could have been the vendor ? I cannot tell him : I can only copy *Stow* in these matters.

† *Stow's London*, book 4. c. 3. *Maitland's History of London*, p. 661. This was the state of the *Charter House* till the suppression of the monasteries, in the reign of *Henry VIII.* Its annual value was 642*l.* It was given to *Sir Thomas Audley*, speaker of the House of Commons, with whose only daughter it went, by marriage, to *Thomas, Duke of Norfolk*, and from him, by descent, to *Thomas, Earl of*

The last circumstance of his tale shall be told in the fitting strain of Froissart. “That same season (1372) died the gentle knight, Sir Walter Manny, in the city of London, whereof all the barons of England were right sorry, for the truth and good counsel that they had always seen and heard in him. He was buried, with great solemnity, in the monastery of the Charterhouse, near London; and at the day of his obsequy there were present the King and all his children, and all the prelates, barons, and knights of England. His possessions, both in England and beyond the sea, fell to the Earl of Pembroke, who had married the Lady Anne, his daughter and heir.” *

CHAP. I.

His death in 1372.

Buried in the Charterhouse.

Among the flower of Edward’s chivalry, Sir James Audley must be mentioned; not, indeed, that a detailed history of his exploits would be interesting; but there was one series of circumstances in his life honourable to his name and the chivalric character, and distinct and pe-

Heroism of Sir James Audley.

Suffolk. In the time of James I. it was purchased by that “right phoenix of charity,” Thomas Sutton, citizen and girdler, for the large sum of 13,000*l.*; and he converted the buildings and gardens into an hospital for the relief of aged men, education of youth, and maintaining the service of God.

- * Froissart, 286.

CHAP. I. culiar from every thing else in the manners of other ages.

Immediately before the battle of Poitiers Sir James said to the Black Prince, " Sir, I have always truly served my Lord your father, and you also, and I shall do so as long as I live ; and, to prove my disposition, I once made a vow that the first battle wherein either the King, your father, or any of his sons, should be engaged, I would be one of the first setters on, or I would die in the endeavour. Therefore, I request your Grace, in reward for any service that ever I did to the King your father, or to you, that you would give me licence to depart from you, in order that I may accomplish my vow."

The Prince accorded to his desire; and, taking him by the hand, exclaimed, " Sir James, may God give you this day grace to be the prowtest knight of all my host."

Audley then departed, and set himself in front of the English battles, accompanied only by four squires, who had sworn never to desert him.

He was anticipated in his gallant purpose by the Lord Eustace Damberticourt, whose chivalry was inspired by the lady Juliana *, but he continued in the front of the battle, performing marvels of arms. He lost no valuable moments in taking prisoners, but when he had disarmed

* See vol. i. p. 204.

one adversary he pressed forwards to another. CHAP. I.
He was severely hurt, both in the body and in the face ; and, at the conclusion of the *mêlée*, his four squires took him out of the battle, and, laying him under a hedge, they bound up his wounds.

Edward soon enquired after the fate of his gallant friend ; and Sir James, expressing his joy that his Prince should think of so poor a knight as he was, called eight of his servants, and made them bear him in a litter to the royal tent.

The Prince took him in his arms, and, embracing him with true fraternal affection, said, “ Sir James, I ought greatly to honour you, for your valiantness this day has passed the renown of us all.”

“ Sir,” answered the knight, with true chivalric modesty, “ you say as it pleaseth you. I would it were so ; but if I have this day advanced myself to serve you, and to accomplish my vow, no prowess ought to be reputed to me.”

“ Sir James,” replied the Prince,” I and all my knights consider you as the best doer in arms this day ; and, in order that you may the better pursue these wars, I retain you for ever as my knight, with five hundred marks of yearly revenue.”

Sir James, after expressing his thanks, was taken back to his tent. He then called the four

His generosity.

CHAP. I. squires before him, and resigned to them the Prince's gift, saying, it was to their valiantness that he owed it. The Prince soon heard of this noble action, and, sending for him, enquired why he renounced his kindness. Sir James craved pardon for his conduct, but affirmed he could do no otherwise; for his squires had that day several times saved his life, and enabled him to accomplish his vow. Edward's nobleness disdained any feeling of personal offence; and, in generous emulation of his friend's liberality, he made in his favour a new grant, more valuable than the former one.*

Memoir of
Sir John
Chandos.

But of all the bold and protruding characters of the court of Edward III., none was more distinguished for the greatness and variety of his exploits than that sage and valiant knight, Sir John Chandos. He was the descendant of a Norman family, attached to William the Conqueror, and which had been renowned in every age of its history.† While only a squire, he accompanied Edward III. in his first war in France; and, at the siege of Cambray, he amazed the prowtest knights by the goodly feats of arms done between him and a squire of Vermandois.

* Ashmole's History of the Garter, c. 26. s. 3. Froissart, cc. 142. 147.

† Dugdale, Baronage, i. 503.

CHAP. I.

At the battle of Vironfosse, immediately afterwards, he was stationed near the person of his sovereign, and, for his valour on that occasion, he received knighthood from the royal sword. * His gallantry to ladies.

Like his friend, Sir Walter Manny, he was gentle, as well as valiant; and it was Chandos that, with another cavalier, saved the ladies of the castle of Poys from the brutal assaults of the rabble. † He was in the van, with the Black Prince, at the battle of Cressy; and, at the battle of Poitiers, he never quitted his side.

On the day that preceded this last great event an amusing proof occurred of the pride of knighthood, regarding armorial bearings. Sir John Chandos, on the part of the English, and the Lord of Claremont for the French, had been reconnoitering the other's forces; and, as they returned to their respective hosts, they met, and were mutually astonished that each bore the same armorial emblem. Amusing instance of the pride of knighthood.

The Lord of Claremont exclaimed, "Chandos, how long have you taken on you to bear my device?"

"Nay, you bear mine," replied the English knight; "for it is mine as well as yours."

* Authorities in Ashmole, p. 702.

† Froissart, c. 125. See the first volume of this work, page 228.

CHAP. I.

“ I deny that” observed the Lord of Claremont; “ and were it not for the truce that this day is between us, I would prove immediately that you have no right to bear my device.”

“ Sir,” rejoined Chandos, with the calmness of truth and bravery, “ you shall find me to-morrow ready to prove it is mine, as well as yours.”

Claremont passionately closed the conference by saying, “ these are common words of you Englishmen; for you can invent nothing new; but you take for your own whatever you see handsome belonging to others.”*

The importance of his counsel at Poitiers,

At the battle of Poitiers the counsel of Chandos was important to the fate of the day: for when the English archers had thrown the French into confusion, he said to the Black Prince, “ Sir, take your horse and ride forth; this day is yours. Let us press forwards to the French king’s battle, for there lies the stress of the matter. I think, verily, by his valiantness, he will not fly.

* Froissart, c. 161. Monseigneur Jehan de Clermont dit, Chandos, ce sont bien les parolles de vos Anglois, qui ne savent adviser riens de nouvel; mais quant, qu’ils voyent, leur est bel. This is a very curious proof of the antiquity of the common remark that Englishmen are a borrowing and improving people, and not famous for originality of invention. It might be contended, but not in this place, that we are both. And here I will transcribe another sentence of Froissart, more characteristic and true. “ Les Anglois, selon leur coutume se divertirent moult tristement.”

I trust, by the grace of God and St. George, that we shall take him ; and, Sir, I heard you say that this day I should see you a good knight.” It was this advice which guided the courage of Edward, and the victory was England’s. CHAP. I.

Nothing remarkable is related of Chandos for nine years after the battle of Poitiers. In 1365 he was the hero and counsellor of the Earl of Mountfort in his war with the Earl of Blois. Mountfort took no measures which were not of his suggestion, or met not with his judgment. Chandos was a valiant as well as a sage knight ; for at the battle of Auray his mighty curtal-axe battered many a helm of the French. The fate of this battle fixed his friend of Mountfort in the dukedom of Britany ; and in the opinion of the French lords, knights, and squires, the victory had been gained by the skill and high prowess of Chandos.* His exploits
in Brittany,

He was seneschal of Aquitain, and of all those countries secured to the English by the treaty of Bretigny. Together with Sir Thomas Phelton, he was summoned into Angouleme to advise the Black Prince regarding the affairs of Spain. The deposed king had arrived at Bourdeaux ; and Edward, resolving to assist him, sought to fortify his determination by the judgment of his and in
Spain.

* Froissart, c. 226.

CHAP. I. friends. Chandos and his counsel earnestly endeavoured to change his resolve. When, indeed, no considerations could shake the purpose of the Black Prince, our knight accompanied him into Spain, his duties to his liege lord demanding his military service.

Is made a
knight banneret.

Before the battle of Navaret he took the rank and title of knight banneret. When the sun arose on that memorable day, it was a great beauty to behold the battles or divisions of the Black Prince's army and their brilliant harness glittering with its beams. The hostile forces slowly approached each other. Edward with a brief train of knights ascended a small hill, and clearly saw their enemy marching straight towards them. The Prince was then followed by his army; and when they had reached the other side of the hill they formed themselves in dense array, and each man buckled on anew his armour and dressed his spear.

Sir John Chandos advanced in front of the battles with his banner uncased in his hand. He presented it to the Prince, saying, "Sir, behold, here is my banner. I require you to display it abroad, and give me leave this day to raise it, for, Sir, I thank God and you, I possess land and heritage sufficient to maintain it withal."

The Prince and King Peter took between their hands the banner, which was blazoned with

a sharp stake gules, on a field argent, and after having cut off the end to make it square they spread it abroad ; and the Prince delivered it to Chandos, saying, “ Sir John, behold your banner, and God send you joy, and honor, and strength, to preserve it ! ” CHAP. I.

Chandos bowed, and after thanking the Prince, he went back to his own company, and said, “ Sirs, behold my banner and yours, keep it as your own. ”

They took it and were right joyful thereof, declaring that, by the pleasure of God and St. George, they would keep and defend it to the utmost of their power.

The banner was then placed in the hands of a worthy English squire, called William Alestry, who bore it that day, and acquitted himself right nobly.

In that battle, Chandos counselled the Duke of Lancaster as sagely as at the battle of Poitiers he had counselled Edward. He performed also wonders in arms, for he was a great and mighty knight, and well formed of all his limbs ; but he adventured himself so far that he was closed in among his enemies, and at length pressed to the earth. A Spaniard of gigantic stature fell upon him with dreadful force ; but Sir John drew a knife from his bosom, which he recollected he had about him, and struck his foeman so fiercely in the back and on the sides,

CHAP. I. that he wounded him to death as he lay on him. Sir John turned him over, and rose quickly on his feet, and his men-at-arms at that time joined him, they having with much difficulty broken through the press when they saw him felled.*

Quits the
Black
Prince;

Chandos had not succeeded in dissuading the Prince of Wales from his Spanish war, and he failed also in withdrawing him from the more fatal project of taxing, beyond usage, his French dominions. Finding him resolved in his purpose, and not wishing to bear any blame or reproach about the matter, Sir John took his leave of the Prince, and made his excuse to go into Normandy to visit the land of St. Saviour le Viscount, whereof he was lord, for he had not been there for several years. When the war so fatal to England's power in France broke out, the Black Prince wrote to Chandos to join him without delay. Sir John immediately went to Angouleme, and his liege lord joyfully received him. He was made Seneschal of Poictou at the request of the barons and knights of that country.

but returns.

The remarkable
generous-
ness of his
conduct to
Lord Pem-
broke.

His deeds of arms equalled his former fame; but it was his chivalric generosity that was most striking, and the circumstances which accompanied the appearance of that feature of his character are very interesting. He wished the

* Froissart, c. 237.

Earl of Pembroke, who was in garrison at Mor-
taygne, to accompany him in an enterprise into
the French territory. The Earl was well con-
tent to have ridden forth; but some of the
knights of his counsel broke his purpose, and
said, "Sir, you are but young, and your noble-
ness is to come; and if you put yourself into the
company of Sir John Chandos, he shall have the
reputation and voice of it, for you will be re-
garded only as his companion; therefore, Sir, it
is better for you, since you are a great lord, that
you perform your enterprises by yourself, and
let Sir John Chandos perform his; for in com-
parison with your estate, he is but a knight
bachelor."

The Earl of Pembroke accordingly excused
himself; and Sir John Chandos, unaided by him,
went into Anjou, accompanied by three hundred
spears of knights and squires, and two hundred
archers. He achieved all his emprises; and
hearing at last that Sir Louis of Sancerre, the
Marshal of France, with a great number of men
of war, was at Hay in Touraine, he wished to
cope with him; but as his own force was inade-
quate to so great an exploit, he sent word of his
intention to the Earl of Pembroke, desiring him
to repair with his soldiers to Chatelerault.

Chandos the herald took the message; but the
Earl by counsel of his knights again refused.

CHAP. I. The herald repaired to Sir John at Chatelerault, and the enterprise was broken up in consequence of the presumption and pride of the Earl of Pembroke : Chandos gave leave to most of his company to depart, and he himself went to Poitiers. Some of his men joined the Earl of Pembroke ; who, at the head of three hundred knights and squires, committed great destruction in Anjou, and returned with immense booty into Poictou.

The Frenchmen, thinking it a more easy chevance to discomfit him than Sir John Chandos, assembled seven hundred soldiers from all the garrisons in the country, and Sir Louis of Sancerre took the command. The Earl of Pembroke heard nothing of the enemy, and not having the vigilance of Sir John Chandos he took no pains to enquire. The English were one day reposing in a village called Puirenon, in the territory of Poictou, when suddenly the Frenchmen came into the town, their spears in their rests, crying their cry, "Our Lady of Sancerre, for the Marshal of France." The English were dressing their horses, and preparing their suppers, when they were thus unexpectedly assailed. Several were killed, all the plunder was retaken, many prisoners were made, and the Earl of Pembroke and some of his knights and archers saved themselves in a preceptory of the Templars. The Frenchmen as-

saulted it gallantly, and it was as gallantly defended, till night put an end to the assault. CHAP. I.

The English were so severely straitened for provisions, that they knew they must speedily surrender, unless Chandos came to their succour. A squire, who professed to know the country, offered to go to Sir John, and he accordingly left the fortress when the French had retired to rest. But he soon lost his road, and did not recover it till morning.

At day-break the French renewed their assaults, and mounted the walls with pavesses to defend their heads from the missiles of the English. The Earl of Pembroke and his little band fought so bravely, from morning until noon, that the French were obliged to desist, and to resort to the uncavalierlike mode of worsting their gallant foes by sending to the neighbouring villages for pikes and mattocks, that they might undermine and break down the wall.

Then the Earl of Pembroke called a squire to him, and said, "Friend, take my courser, and issue out at the back postern, and ride straight to Poitiers, and show Sir John Chandos the state and danger we are in ; and recommend me to him by this token," added the Earl, taking a ring from his finger : " deliver it to him, for Sir John knows it well."

CHAP. I.

The squire took the ring, and immediately mounting his courser, fled through the postern, thinking he should achieve great honor if he could reach Sir John Chandos.

The first squire having lost so much time in the confusion of the night did not arrive at Poitiers till nine in the morning. He found Sir John at mass; and, in consequence of the importance of his message, he disturbed his devotions.

Chandos's feelings had been severely offended by the pride and presumption of the Earl of Pembroke, and he was in no great haste to relieve him. He heard the mass out. The tables were then arranged for the noon repast.

The servants, among whom the message of the squire had been bruited, enquired of Sir John if he would go to dinner. He replied, "Yes; if it were ready."

He went into the hall, and knights and squires brought him water. While he was washing, the second squire from the Earl of Pembroke, pale, weary, and travel-soiled, entered the hall, and knelt before him, and took the ring out of his purse, and said, "Right dear Sir, the Earl of Pembroke recommends himself to you by this token, and heartily desires your assistance in relieving him from his present danger at Puirenon."

Chandos took the ring; but instead of calling his friends to arm, he coldly observed, that it would be difficult to assist the Earl if the affair were such as the squire had represented it. "Let us go to dinner," said he; and accordingly the knights sat down.

The first course was eaten in silence, for Chandos was thoughtful, and the minds of his friends were not idle.

In the middle of the second course, when the generous wine of France had roused his better nature, he started from a reverie, and with a smile of pride and generousness exclaimed, "Sirs, the Earl of Pembroke is a noble man, and of great lineage: he is son of my natural lord the King of England, for he hath married his daughter, and in every thing he is companion to the Earl of Cambridge. He hath required me to come to him, and I ought to consent to his desire."

Then thrusting the table from him, and rising to the full height of his fine martial figure, he cried, "Gallant knights, I will ride to Puirenon."

This noble and generous resolve found an echo in the heart of every one that was present. The trumpets sounded, the knights hastily donned their armour, and saddled the first horses they could meet with; and in a few moments the court-yard glittered with more than two hundred spears. They rode apace towards Puire-

CHAP. I. non ; but news of their approach reached the vigilant French in sufficient time for them to abandon the siege, and effect their retreat with their prisoners and booty.

The Earl of Pembroke soon found that the terror of the name of Chandos had scared the foe, and he proposed to his companions to ride towards Poitiers and meet their deliverers. They accordingly left the village in a right pleasant mood, some on foot, others on horses, and many a gallant steed carried double that day. They had not ridden a league before they met Sir John Chandos and his company, who much to their regret heard of the retreat of the French. The two parties rode in company for the space of three leagues, holding merry converse on deeds of arms. They then departed, Chandos returning to Poitiers, and the Earl of Pembroke to Mortayne.*

The last
curious cir-
cumstances
of his life.

Our knight's career of glory approached its close. By the treachery of a monk, the abbey of St. Salvyn, seven leagues from Poitiers, fell into the possession of the French, who all that year, 1371, had been harassing the English territories. Chandos was deeply mortified at the loss of the abbey, it being within the scope of his seneschalship. To recover it by chivalric skill, or to bring his enemies to fair and manly

* Froissart, cc. 265, 266.

battle, seemed equally impossible, and his high spirit was wounded at these insults to his military abilities. On the last day of December he made an unsuccessful attempt to recover the abbey; and when he returned to the town of Chauvigny, he dismissed two-thirds of his troops, knights of Poictou and England. Sir Thomas Percy, with thirty spears, had his leave to go in quest of adventures. His own mind was too ill at rest for him to indulge in mere chivalric exercises; and after he had wished them good speed he went back into the house full of melancholy thoughts. He would not retire to rest though the night was far advanced; but he remained in the kitchen warming himself by the fire, his servants endeavouring by their jests and tales to banish his uneasiness.

Before daylight a man with the haste and anxiety of the bearer of news of import came into the house.

“The Frenchmen are riding abroad,” said he to Sir John.

“How knowest thou that?”

“I left St. Salvyn with them,” was the answer.

“Which way did they ride?” demanded Chandos.

“Their exact course I wot not,” replied his informant; “but I saw them on the high road to Poictiers.”

CHAP. I.

“What Frenchmen?” required Sir John.

“Sir Louis of St. Julian, and Carnot the Breton.”

“Well,” quoth Chandos,” I care not: I have no mind to ride forth to-night: it may happen that they may be encountered, though I am not there.”

The conversation closed here, but Chandos could not dismiss the subject from his mind. He mused upon what he had heard, and hope gradually broke through the gloom of his disappointment.

He then told his knights he would ride to Poitiers, and they joyfully caparisoned their horses.

Chandos and forty spears left Chauvigny before daylight, and getting into the Frenchmen’s course, they soon overtook them near the bridge of Lusac. They were on foot, preparing to attack Sir Thomas Percy and his little band, who had posted themselves on the other side of the bridge.

Before the Frenchmen and Bretons had arranged their plan of assault, they heard the trampling of Chandos’s war-horses, and turning round they saw his dreadful banner displayed. He approached within three furlongs of the bridge and had a parley with them. He re-

proached them for their robberies and acts of violence in the country whereof he was seneschal. CHAP. I.

“It is more than a year and a half,” he continued, “that I have set all my aim to find and encounter you, and now, I thank God, I see you and speak to you. It shall soon be known who is prowtest, you or I. You have often vaunted your desire to meet me; now you may see me before you.—I am John Chandos: regard me well,” he thundered in their ears, his countenance darkening as he spoke.

At that moment an English squire was struck to the earth by the lance of a Breton. The generous nature of Chandos was roused at this ungallant act; and, in a tone of mingled expostulation and reproof, he cried to his own company, “Sirs, how is it that you suffer this squire thus to be slain? A foot, a foot!”

He dismounted, and so did all his band, and they advanced against the French. His banner, with the escutcheon above his arms, was carried before him, and some of his men-at-arms surrounded it. Chandos missed his steps, for the ground was slippery from the hoar-frost of the morning, and in his impatience for battle he entangled his feet in the folds of his surcoat. He fell just as he reached his enemy; and as he was rising, the lance of a French squire entered his flesh, under the left eye, between the

CHAP. I. nose and the forehead. Chandos could not see to ward off the stroke ; for, some years before, he had lost the sight of that eye, while hunting the hart in the country round Bourdeaux : unhappily, too, his helmet was without the defence of its vizor.

He fell upon the earth, and rolled over two or three times, from the pain of the wound, but he never spoke again.

The French endeavoured to seize him ; but his uncle, Sir Edward Clifford, bestrode the body, and defended it so valorously, that soon none dared to approach him.

Grief at his death.

The barons and knights of Poictou were conquerors, and when the confusion was hushed, they flocked round their outstretched friend and seneschal. They wept, they wrung their hands, they tore their hair, and gave way to every violent expression of grief. They called him the flower of chivalry, and lamented the hour when the lance was forged which had brought him into peril of death.

He heard and understood them well, but was unable to reply. His servants then unarmed him ; and, laying him upon a pavesse, or large shield, they bore him gently to the neighbouring fortress of Mortimer.

He died on the following day ; and a cavalier more courteous, and more worthily adorned with

noble virtues and high qualities, never adorned the English chivalry. He was, in sooth, as gal-
lant a knight as ever laid lance in rest. CHAP. I.

The Prince of Wales, the Earl of Cambridge, the Earl of Pembroke, and, indeed, all the English barons and knights then in Guienne, lamented his fate, as the loss of all the English dominions in France; and many right noble and valiant knights of France mourned the death of a generous foe, and they wished he had been made prisoner; for they said he was so sage and imaginative that he would have planned a peace between the two nations. *

Chandos was never married. All the estates which he had won by his valour went to his three sisters.

* Froissart, c. 270.

CHAP. II.

PROGRESS OF CHIVALRY IN GREAT BRITAIN,
FROM THE REIGN OF RICHARD II. TO THAT OF HENRY VIII.

Complaints of the unchivalric State of Richard's Court.....
Influence of Chivalry on the national Character.....
Scottish Chivalry.....Chivalric Kindness of Robert
Bruce.....Mutual Chivalry between the Scotch and
English Courts.....French Knights' Opinions of Scot-
tish Chivalry.....Courtesies between English and Scot-
tish Knights.....Chivalric Battle of Otterbourn.....
Hotspur and the Douglas.....A cavaleresque Story.....
Reign of Henry IV.....Chivalric Parley between him
and the Duke of Orleans.....Henry's unchivalric Con-
duct at Shrewsbury.....Henry V.....Knights of the
Bath.....Henry's Love of chivalric Books.....His
chivalric Bearing.....Commencement of the Decline of
Chivalry.....The Civil Wars injured Chivalry.....
Caxton's Lamentation.....He exaggerates the Evil.....
Many gallant English Knights.....Character of Henry
VIII. with Reference to Chivalry.....Tournaments in
his Reign.....Field of the Cloth of Gold.....Intro-
duction of Italian Literature favoured Romance.....
.....Popularity of Chivalric Literature.....English
Knights continued to break Lances for Ladies' Love.....
State of Scottish Chivalry at this Period.....James IV.
.....Chivalric Circumstances at Flodden Field.

CHAP.
II.

IN the reign of Richard II. the splendor of England's chivalry was clouded. That monarch

had neither spirit nor ambition to recover the possessions which had been wrested from the crown during the illness of his father, the Black Prince, and the imbecility of his grandfather, Edward III.; for though the war with France nominally continued, yet he gave few occasions for his knights to break their lances with the French. Not that England enjoyed a state of perfect peace, but the wars in France and Portugal had no brilliant results, for the English knights were no longer guided by the sageness of Chandos, or the gallantry of Prince Edward.

CHAP.
II.
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England was menaced with invasion by Charles VI. of France; but the project died away, and nothing gave greater offence to the people than the want of spirit in the court, in not revenging itself for the insult. A comparison was immediately instituted between the present and the preceding reign. Where were those great enterprises, it was asked, which distinguished the days of King Edward III.? where could be found the valiant men who had fought with the Prince, his son? In those days England was feared, and was reputed as possessing the flower of Christian chivalry; but now no man speaks of her, now there are no wars but such as are made on poor men's purses, and thereto every one is inclined. *

Complaints
of the un-
chivalric
state of
Richard's
court.

* Froissart, liv. ii. c. 82.

CHAP.
II.

Influence of
chivalry on
the national
character.

The expensive wars of England with France were productive of mighty consequences to the English constitution. An application for redress of grievances always met the demand of supplies, and public liberty benefitted by the costly ambition of the crown. The wars did not spring from chivalry, and we cannot, therefore, ascribe to that bright source any general political advantages which resulted from them: but chivalry gave the tone to the manner in which they were waged; hers were all the humanities of the contest; hers was, at least, half the distinction (for we must remember the bow was as formidable as the lance) of establishing the glory of the country; of giving her that proud character for martial prowess, which has outlived her brief and feeble tenure of the territorial consequences of victory.

Richard II. did not emulate the martial fame of his father. His neglect of the warriors of the former reign was not among the slightest causes of that disaffection which ultimately ruined him. One of the public grievances, as stated to the throne by the House of Commons, was that the chivalry of the country had been discountenanced and disgraced, and that the growth of vice had consequently increased.*

* 4 Plac. Parl. iii. 5.

Richard was a voluptuous prince ; the splendour of chivalry hung over his court ; his tilts and tournaments were unusually magnificent ; but the martial and, therefore, the chief spring of knight-hood was wanting. A warlike sovereign could have found rich materials among his people for ambitious enterprises. The increasing wealth of the nation, arising from its improving commerce, displayed itself in luxuries ; and the aspiring commonalty imitated the chivalric courtesies of the great. It marks the state of manners, that the splendid tapestries of the citizens represented the martial achievements of Edward III. *

CHAP.
II.
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The names of the Douglas and the Percy were so highly distinguished in the fourteenth century, that the reign of Richard II. is a fit place for some notices of northern chivalry. The battle of Bannockburn proved that, in gallantry and generosity, the essentials of knight-hood, the Scots were as noble as the cavaliers of the south ; and there was a fine wildness of imagination among the people which was suitable to the romantic genius of chivalry. † But those

Scottish
chivalry.

* Thomas of Elmham, p. 72. His general expression, tapestries representing the ancient victories of England, I presume chiefly meant those of Edward III.

† The tales of chivalry had for their prologue some lines

CHAP.
II.
—

of Scotland's heroes whose lives are known to us were patriots rather than cavaliers, the circumstances of the times in which they lived inflaming them with different passions than those which knighthood could inspire.

Sometimes, however, the stern virtues of patriotism were graced and softened by chivalric courtesy. Perhaps the most pleasing instance of this occurred in the conduct of Robert Bruce,

expressive of war and love; but in a grander strain the poetical biographer of the Bruce sings:—

“ Ah! freedom is a noble thing;
 Freedom makes men to have liking;
 Freedom all solace to men gives;
 He lives at ease, that freely lives.
 A noble heart may have none ease,
 Nor ellys¹ nought that may him please,
 If freedom fail: for free liking
 Is *yearned*² o'er all other thing.
Na he that aye has lived free
 May not know well the property,
 The anger, *na* the wretched doom
 That is coupled to foul thralldom.
 But, if he had essayed it,
 Then all *perquer*³ he should it wit,
 And should think freedom more to prize
 Than all the gold in world that is,
 Thus contrary things ever more
 Discoverings of the tother are.”

The Bruce, line 225, &c.

¹ nor else. ² eagerly desired. ³ perfectly.

in the year 1317, when he was assisting his brother, Edward Bruce, to subjugate Ireland; and I will not injure the story by telling it in any other way than in the simple and beautiful strain of the poet :

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Chivalric
kindness of
Robert
Bruce.

“ The king has heard a woman cry,
He asked, what that was in hy ? ¹
It is the layndar ², Sir, said ane,
That her child-ill ³ right now has ta'en,
And must leave now behind us here,
Therefore she makes an evil cheer. ⁴
The king said, “ Certes, it were pity
That she in that point left should be,
For certes, I trow there is no man
That he no will rue ⁵ a woman than.”
His hosts all then arrested he,
And gert a tent soon stintit ⁶ be ;
And gert her gang in hastily,
And other women to be her by.
While she was delivered he bade,
And syne forth on his ways rade.
And how she forth should carried be,
Or he forth fure ⁷ ordained he.
This was a full great courtesy,
That swilk a king and so mighty,
Gert his men dwell on this manner,
But for a poor lavender. ⁸

The Bruce, book xi. l. 270.

¹ haste. ² laundress. ³ child-bed. ⁴ stop. ⁵ pity.

⁶ pitched. ⁷ moved. ⁸ laundress.

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At the court of the Scottish kings, knight-hood was always regarded as a distinction worthy of the highest ambition. Its objects were the same as in other countries, — the defence of the church, protection of the helpless, and generosity to woman. The form of the chivalric oath has been preserved, and it presents us with a curious picture of ancient manners :

1. I shall fortify and defend the Christian religion to the uttermost of my power.

2. I shall be loyal and true to my sovereign lord the king ; to all orders of chivalry, and to the noble office of arms.

3. I shall fortify and defend justice at my power ; and that without favour or enmity.

4. I shall never flee from my sovereign lord the king ; nor from his lieutenants, in time of affray or battle.

5. I shall defend my native land from all aliens and strangers.

6. I shall defend the just action and quarrel of all ladies of honour, of all true and friendless widows, of orphans, and of maidens of good fame.

7. I shall do diligence, wheresoever I hear that there are any murderers, traitors, or masterful robbers, who oppress the king's lieges and

poor people, to bring them to the law at my power. CHAP.
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8. I shall maintain and uphold the noble state of chivalry, with horse, armour, and other knightly habiliments, and shall help and succour those of the same order, at my power, if they have need.

9. I shall enquire and seek to have the knowledge and understanding of all the articles and points contained in the book of chivalry. All these promises to observe, keep, and fulfil, I oblige myself: so help me God by my own hand, and by God himself.*

Chivalric honours formed sometimes a bond of connection between the Scottish and the English sovereigns. When Prince Henry (afterwards King Henry II.) arrived at the age of sixteen years, his father Geoffry sent him through England with a numerous and splendid retinue into Scotland, to receive the honour of knight-hood from his mother's uncle, King David. The ceremony was performed with great pomp, in the midst of a prodigious concourse of the English, Scottish, and Norman nobility; and the Prince

Mutual
chivalry be-
tween the
Scotch and
English
courts.

* Selden's Titles of Honour, and Pinkerton's History of Scotland, on the authority of a book which I have not been able to meet with, called "Certain Matters composed together." Edinb. 1597. 4to.

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—

spent about eight months in the court of Scotland, perfecting himself in military exercises.*

A few years afterwards chivalric honors were conferred by Henry II. of England upon Malcolm II. But the granting of knighthood was not regarded as a matter of mere courtesy. When the kings met at Carlisle, in 1158, the previous cession of the northern provinces by Malcolm to Henry gave rise to such heats and feuds, that the Scottish monarch departed without receiving the honour he desired. In the next year, however, Henry, by excellent address, persuaded Malcolm to accompany him to France for the recovery of Tholouse, which he claimed as part of the inheritance of Eleanor his queen; and the honor which Henry had refused in the last year to give him at Carlisle, he now conferred upon him at Tours in France, in the course of his return from the Tholouse expedition.†

In 1249 when King Alexander III. repaired from Scotland to York to be married to the Princess Margaret, daughter of Henry III. of England, the ceremonies of chivalry preceded those of marriage. Alexander received the ensigns of knighthood from the King of England on Christmas day, and the hand of his bride on

* Henry's History of England, vol. iii. p. 80. 4to.

† Border History of England and Scotland, p. 91.

the following morning.* Tournaments were occasionally held at the Scottish court, and strangers were courteously received.† Knights from Scotland are frequently mentioned in the old chronicles as having won the prize in the chivalric festivals in France and England. In the wars of the Scots with Edward III. no circumstances of a character peculiarly knightly can be selected; and in the intervals of truce chivalry could not, as in the wars between England and France, give the guise of friendship to occasional intercourse. In the year 1341, a time of peace, Edward passed some time in Scotland. Tournaments and jousts formed the occupation of the strangers and the natives; but neither party regarded the gentle rules of the tourney, and two Scottish knights and one English knight were killed.‡

Nothing could contribute more powerfully to the advancement of chivalry in the north than the frequent intercourse between the Scots and the French. The latter people, however, would not always acknowledge the chivalric character of their allies. In the year 1385, a troop of French knights joined the Scottish king; and they soon were grieved that they had ever left

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French
knights'
opinions of
Scottish
chivalry.

* Border History, p. 143.

† Nisbet's Heraldry, i. 7.

‡ Knyghton, col. 2580.

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their own country. They complained to their leader Sir John of Vienne of their unhappy lot. They had no tapestried halls and goodly castles as in France; and instead of soft beds their couches were as hard as the ground.

Sir John was a true son of chivalry; and he said to them, "Sirs, it behoves us to suffer a little, and to speak fair since we are in the perils of war. Let us take in cheerfulness that which we find. We cannot always be at Paris, Dijon, Beaune, or at Chalons. It behoveth them that live in the world thinking to have honour, to suffer poverty as well as to enjoy wealth."

The reader of English history remembers that Richard II. invaded Scotland; that at the same time the Scots ravaged Cumberland and Westmorland; and that each army boasted that the destruction it had committed was fully as dreadful as the havoc made by the other. It is more curious to notice the trait of manners which general historians have altogether omitted, that when the French knights returned home, they complained that they had never passed through so painful an enterprise. Not that they regarded the perilous *mêlée*, but it was because they returned without horse or harness, poor and feeble. They wished that the French king would unite with the English king, and go into Scotland and destroy that realm for ever. The

Scots were an evil people, traitors, and altogether foolish in feats of war.*

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English knights always more rejoiced when the trumpet summoned them to France than to Scotland. The rich wines, the fine country, the superior chivalry of the French were preferred before the poverty and bleakness of the north. When the English knights went to Scotland they were obliged to carry provisions with them; and also horses' shoes and harness, the country not furnishing iron or leather.†

The wars between England and Scotland, though fierce and sanguinary, admitted the display of the liberal feelings of chivalry. "Englishmen on the one party, and Scots on the other," says Froissart, "are good men of war; for when they meet there is a hard fight without sparing.

Courtesies
between
English and
Scottish
knights.

* This amusing opinion of the French knights should be given in the original language. "Adonc eurent plusieurs chevaliers et escuyers de France passage: et retournerent en Flandres, ou là ou ils pouvoyent arriver, tous affamés, sans monture, et sans armeures: et Escoce maudissoient, et le heure qu'ils y avoyent entré: et disoyent qu'onques si duc voyage ne fut: et qu'ils voudroyent que le roi de France s'accordast aux Anglois, un an ou deux, et puis allast en Escoce, pour tout destruire, car onques si mauvaises gens ne verint: n'y ne trouverent si faux et se traistres, ne de si petite congnuissance. Vol.ii. c. 174.

† The Scotch knights procured horse-shoes and harness ready made from Flanders. Froissart, vol.ii. c. 3. Lord Berners' translation.

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There is no pause between them as long as spears, swords, axes, or daggers will endure. When one party hath obtained the victory, they then glorify so in their deeds of arms and are so joyful, that such as are taken are ransomed ere they go out of the field ; so that shortly each of them is so content with the other, that at their departing they will say courteously, God thank you.”*

These remarks of Froissart, so interesting because so characteristic of manners, prelude the most chivalric battle that ever was fought between Scotland and England. Other battles were decided either by the bow or by that general military skill which was not peculiar to chivalry ; but the battle of Otterbourn was a knightly *mêlée*, and was as truly chivalric as an encounter of cavaliers in the tournament. In the reign of Richard II. of England, and a few years after the circumstances in his time already alluded to, the Scots commanded by James Earl Douglas, taking advantage of the troubles between the King and his parliament, poured upon the south. When they were sated with plunder and destruction, they rested at Newcastle, near the English force which the Earl of Northumberland and other border-chieftains had hastily levied.

Chivalric
battle of
Otter-
bourn, 21st
July, 1388.

* Froissart, vol. ii. c. 142.

The Earl's two sons were young and lusty knights, and ever foremost at the barriers to skirmish. Many proper feats of arms were done and achieved. The fighting was hand to hand. The noblest encounter was that which occurred between the Earl Douglas and Sir Henry Percy, surnamed Hotspur.* The Scot won the pennon of his foeman ; and in the triumph of his victory he exclaimed that he would carry it to Scotland, and set it on high on his castle of Dalkeith, that it might be seen afar off.

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—
Hotspur
and the
Douglas.

Percy indignantly replied, that Douglas should not pass the border without being met in a manner which would give him no cause for boasting.

With equal spirit the Earl Douglas invited him that night to his lodging to seek for his pennon.

The Scots then retired, and kept careful watch, lest the taunts of their leader should urge the Englishmen to make an attack. Percy's spirit burned to efface his reproach, but he was counselled into calmness.

The Scots then dislodged, seemingly resolved to return with all haste to their own country.

* " Henry Percy," says Holingshed, " was surnamed, for his often pricking, Henry Hotspur, as one that seldom times rested, if there were any service to be done abroad." History of Scotland, p. 240.

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But Otterbourn arrested their steps. The castle resisted the assault ; and the capture of it would have been of such little value to them that most of the Scotch knights wished that the enterprise should be abandoned.

Douglas commanded, however, that the assault should be persevered in, and he was entirely influenced by his chivalric feelings. He contended that the very difficulty of the enterprise was the reason of undertaking it ; and he wished not to be too far from Sir Henry Percy, lest that gallant knight should not be able to do his devoir in redeeming his pledge of winning the pennon of his arms again.

Hotspur was not altogether that impatient spirit which poetry has described him. He longed, indeed, to follow the Douglas, and redeem his badge of honor ; but the sage knights of the country, and such as were well expert in arms, spoke against his opinion, and said to him, “ Sir, there fortuneth in war oftentimes many losses. If the Earl of Douglas has won your pennon, he bought it dear, for he came to the gate to seek it, and was well beaten : another day you shall win as much of him and more. Sir, we say this because we know well that all the power of Scotland is abroad in the fields ; and if we issue forth and are not strong enough to fight with them, (and perchance they have made this skirmish

with us to draw us out of the town,) they may soon enclose us, and do with us what they will. It is better to lose a pennon than two or three hundred knights and squires, and put all the country to adventure.”

By such words as these Hotspur and his brother were refrained from their purpose ; for like sage and imaginative knights they would do nothing against counsel.

Soon afterwards it was discovered that the whole amount of the Scottish force did not exceed three thousand men. Hotspur’s heart leapt for joy at the prospect of glory which this news opened to him ; and, like a true son of chivalry, he cried to his friends, “ Sirs, let us spring upon our horses, for by the faith I owe unto God, and to my lord my father, I will go and seek my pennon, and dislodge the Scots this same night.”

Incontinently knights and squires donned their helms and cuirasses, and vaulted on their war-steeds. They rode more than apace to Otterbourn, and reached the Scottish camp by night. They far outnumbered their foemen, but the numerical was not the physical strength, for the English were forespent with travel, while the Scots were fresh and well rested.

The hostile banners waved in the night-breeze, and the bright moon, which had been more wont to look upon the loves than the wars of chivalry,

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lighted up the Scottish camp. A battle ensued of as valiant a character as any recorded in the pages of history ; for there was neither knight nor squire but that did his devoir and fought hand to hand. The English dashed upon their foemen with such spirit, that their charge would have been irresistible, if Douglas, who was of great heart and high of enterprise, had not taken his axe in both his hands, and supported his retreating band. At length he was encountered by three spears at once, and borne perforce to the earth. One of his companions, a gallant knight, and a chaplain who fought on that occasion like a valiant man of arms with a good axe in his hands, skirmished about the Earl as he lay, and kept the press from him.*

When it was known that Douglas had fallen, some of his knights ran with breathless anxiety to the spot and asked him how he sped. “ Right evil, cousins,” quoth the Earl ; “ but, thank God, very few of my ancestors have died in their beds. But I require you to avenge my death, for I feel my heart fainting within me. Raise my banner, but do not declare my case to any one ; for my enemies would rejoice, and my friends be discomfited, to hear that I had been wounded to death.”

* The gallantry of this fighting priest was afterwards rewarded by the gift of the archdeaconry of Aberdeen.

In a moment the proud ensign of his chivalry waved once again over the Scottish knights, and each gallant man-at-arms cheered his companion's heart by crying the war-cry of the Douglas. The Percys were made prisoners, Hotspur * by the Earl Montgomery, and Sir Ralph by Sir John Maxwell. Finally, the Scottish chivalry prevailed, and they remained masters of the field. †

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Nothing could be more gallant than the demeanor of the Scots. They wished to take alive Thomas Felton, an English squire, whose valour excited their admiration; but, like a true hero, he submitted to be slain rather than to be vanquished.

The Scots, when the Englishmen yielded, were courteous, and set them to their ransom; and every man said to his prisoner, "Sir, go

* He was afterwards ransomed; and, according to Camden, Pounouny castle, in Scotland, was built out of the ransom money.

† Walsingham, (p. 366.) says, that the Earl of Dunbar came in and turned the scale in favor of the Scots. Nothing of this is mentioned by Froissart, who had his account of the battle from the Douglas family, at whose castle he resided some time. If it be said that their account was probably a prejudiced one, the same objection may be raised against that of Walsingham. The Douglas' always spoke of their victory with true chivalric modesty; for they declared that it was the consequence of the exhausted state of the English after the march from Newcastle.

CHAP. and unarm you, and take your ease ;” and they
II. lived together as if they had been brethren.

A chivalric
story.

Among the circumstances connected with the battle, none is more interesting than this : — When the fate of the night was decided, Sir Matthew Redman, an Englishman, and governor of Berwick, spurred his horse from the field, but was hotly pursued by the Scottish knight, Sir James Lindsay, and he could not escape, for his panting charger fell under him. Lindsay dismounted, and the two knights fought well and chivalrously, the Scotsman with his axe (the favorite weapon of the nation), and the English knight with his sword. The axe prevailed, and Redman surrendered himself, rescue or no rescue. He wished to go to Newcastle, and his master (for such, as we have often seen, was the title of a knight who held another captive,) permitted him to depart, on his pledging his word of chivalry, that within three weeks he would meet him at Edinburgh. The knights then separated ; but as Lindsay was returning to the Scottish host, priding himself on his success, he was surrounded by the Bishop of Durham and a numerous troop. Some hours before, they had marched purposely to the succour of Percy ; but the clangour of the *mêlée* had terrified them into a retreat. They possessed sufficient bravery, however, to take a single and battle-worn knight. He was led to Newcastle, where he met Sir Mat-

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threw Redman; and these two gallant cavaliers dined right merrily together, and, after quaffing many a cup of rich wine, to the honour and health of their mistresses, they arranged with the bishop the conditions of each other's liberation. *

The reign of Henry IV. of England was not altogether void of chivalric interest. While Duke of Lancaster he had chosen Louis, Duke of Orleans, for his brother in chivalry. Each had promised to the other that they would live in the warmest affection of true friendship. Each vowed to be a friend and well-wisher to the friends and well-wishers of the other, and an enemy to his enemies, as became the honour and reputation of both; and that at all times, and in all places, they would by words and deeds assist each other in the defence of his person, honour, and estate. These chivalric engagements between the two Dukes had been made known to the world in an instrument called a letter of alliance, dated the 17th of June, 1396.

Reign of
Henry IV.
Chivalric
parley be-
tween him
and the
Duke of
Orleans.

The friendship lasted during the remainder of the reign of Richard II.; but the deposition of that monarch was so odious a circumstance, in

* Froissart, vol. ii. c. 146. Buchanan, lib. 9. p. 173, &c.

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the eyes of the court of France, the daughter of whose sovereign Richard had married, that although no open rupture of the existing truce between the two nations took place, yet many high-spirited French noblemen made private war upon the English king.

The Duke of Orleans, his sworn brother in arms, challenged Henry IV. to meet him at any place he chose in France, each of them being accompanied by one hundred knights and squires, of name and arms without reproach, and to combat together till one of the parties should surrender.

Henry declined the challenge, alleging, as his reasons, the public truce between the two countries, to which the Duke of Orleans was a party, and the particular treaty of alliance between themselves. That treaty, however, he now annulled, and threw aside thenceforth all love and affection towards the Duke. He declared that it would be unworthy of his high rank to accept the challenge of any one of inferior dignity to himself, nor had any of his royal progenitors ever employed his arms with one hundred or more persons, in such a cause: but whenever he should think it convenient to visit his possessions on the French side of the sea, accompanied by such numbers of persons as he thought proper, the Duke of Orleans might assemble as many persons as he should judge expedient, to acquire

honour in the accomplishing of all his courageous desires ; and he should not depart without being satisfied in a combat between themselves ; which mode of terminating their dispute was preferable to any other that might occasion the effusion of more Christian blood.

The Duke of Orleans replied that the public truce had been violated by Henry himself, when he made war upon Richard the ally of France. With respect to the articles of friendship between themselves, the allies of the king of France had been excepted from their provisions, and therefore either party was left to his choice of conduct regarding the deportment of the other to any of their allies. On the subject of a remark of Henry that no knight of whatever rank he might be, ought to request a deed of arms, until he should have returned any articles of alliance that might exist between himself and the challenged person, Louis satirically enquired whether Henry had rendered to his lord, King Richard, the oath of fidelity he had made to him, before he had proceeded in the manner he had done against his person. The Duke insinuated that Richard's death had been compassed by Henry, and then enquired how the King could suffer that noble lady, the Queen of England, to return to France so desolate after the death of her husband, despoiled of her portion and dower.

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The man who sought to gain honour was always the defender and guardian of the rights of widows and damsels of virtuous life, such as the niece of the Duke of Orleans was known to lead; and as he was so nearly related to her, acquitting himself towards God and towards her as a relation, he replied, that to avoid effusion of blood he would cheerfully meet him in single combat.

In reply to this letter Henry observed, that when public affairs had called him from France to England, Louis had promised him aid, and that therefore the Duke could not in justice comment on the late revolution: but that with respect to Richard personally, he, Henry, now king, denied most warmly and solemnly that his death had been occasioned by his order or consent. He declared it to be false, and said it would be false each time that Louis uttered it; and this he was ready to prove, through the grace of God, in personal combat. He repelled the charge of cruelty to Isabella; contending that, on the contrary, he had ever shown kindness and friendship to her, and wishing that Louis had never acted with greater rigour, unkindness, or cruelty towards any lady or damsel than he had done to her.

But the proposed combat never took place; nor can it be inferred that either party was very

sincere in his challenge, for the ambassadors of Henry at the court of France often complained of the conduct of Louis, but Louis never reiterated his challenge, and no satisfaction was rendered, the King and council waiving the matter entirely, and coldly stating that they would always continue firm to the engagements which they had made with England.*

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In another event, the most important event of his reign, the conduct of Henry was most decidedly unchivalric. When at the battle of Shrewsbury (July 21. 1403,) the banners advanced, and the air was rent with the war-cries “Saint George!” and “Esperance Percy!” the archers on either side drew their tough bow-strings with such murderous energy, that the several lines of knights and men-at-arms with difficulty maintained their ground.

Henry's
unchivalric
conduct at
Shrewsbury.

In this moment of peril, when the stoutest hearts quailed, the gallant Hotspur, and Archibald Earl Douglas †, with a small band of

* Monstrelet, vol.i. c.9, &c. Rymer, *Fœdera*, vol.viii. p.310, 311.

† This Archibald Douglas, Earl of Galloway, called the Grim, was an illegitimate son of a good Sir James Douglas, and the successor in the earldom of Douglas to the Earl James who fell at Otterbourn. Archibald had been taken prisoner by Hotspur at the battle of Holmedon Hill; and Percy agreed, that if he would fight with him as valiantly against Henry IV. as he had fought during that battle, he

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brothers in arms, started from their host, and throwing their warlike shields before them, rushed, amidst an iron shower, into the very centre, the best defended part, of the royal army. Their battle-axes and good swords made fearful havoc among the King's guards, the standard of England was trodden under foot, and the Earl of Stafford and that "dear and true industrious friend" of the King, Sir Robert Blunt, who were armed in the royal guise, were slain. * Hotspur sought in vain for the King; for when His Grace observed the Percies sweeping across the field, he had followed the prudent counsel of the Earl of Dunbar, and changing his armour for that of a common knight, he repaired to another part of the plain.

The Prince of Wales displayed more bravery than his father, and he was wounded while maintaining his position.

would give him his liberty free of ransom-money. Douglas, as a soldier and an enemy of the English king, had no objection to these terms, and therefore he fought at the battle of Shrewsbury. Buchanan, book 10.

* Well, indeed, might the Scottish knight say,

"Another king! they grow like Hydras' heads:
I am the Douglas, fatal to all those
That wear these colours on them."

Shakspeare, Henry IV, Part I. act v. scene 4.

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Hotspur now formed his little band into a dense array, and endeavoured to retire to his line of knights. But while he was fighting with all the courage of his high chivalry, a random arrow brought him to the earth. His death was almost instantaneous ; and the event was viewed through either army with the various feelings of joy and woe. He had been the inspiring soul of his own host, and his fall was the signal for their dispersion.

The character of courage can scarcely be denied to Henry IV., but it was not graced by any of the lofty daring of chivalry. An Edward would have braved the fiercest danger, he would never have thrown aside the insignia of his rank, and clothing some noble friends in the royal habiliments have left them to perish in his stead. The conduct of Henry might have been royal, but it certainly was not chivalric. *

The glories of chivalry seemed to be revived in the reign of Harry Monmouth. His coronation was accompanied by a large creation of a class of knights, whose peculiar nature I have not yet expressed. In early ages of English Henry V.

* Otterbourne, p. 239. 244. Walsingham, p. 410, &c. Hall, folio 22. I mean not to say, however, that his conduct was without precedent, for at the great battle of Poitiers nineteen French knights were arrayed like King John.

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II.Knights of
the Bath.

history there seems to have been two descriptions of cavaliers, the Knights of the Sword, and the Knights of the Bath. The former were made both in times of war and peace, the latter only at coronations, royal marriages, and other festive occasions. The dubbing with the sword was the simple ceremony of creating knights of the one class ; but most of the forms of chivalry were used in the investiture of those of the other : and as the Bath was a very remarkable part of the ceremony, and the exhortation to the performance of chivalric duties was delivered to the knight while he was in it, the knights so created were reputed knights of the Bath.

The Knights of the Sword, or Knights Bachelors, were created by the sheriffs of counties, by virtue of letters from the king commanding his officers to knight those persons, who, in consequence of their landed estates, were worthy of the honour ; but when the other class was to be enlarged, the king selected a certain number of the young nobility and gentry, and he himself assisted at the ceremony.

Knights of the Bath always took precedence of knights bachelors ; and as the superiority of knights of the Garter was shown by the circumstance, that on the installation of a knight there was a creation of knights of the Bath, so on any other occasion when knights of the Bath were

made, there was, in honor of the circumstance, a creation of knights of the Sword.

The exact time when this distinction was first made between knights of the Bath and knights of the Sword has eluded the investigation of antiquaries, nor does it deserve a lengthened enquiry. It may be marked in the reign of Henry IV.*, and was probably of earlier origin ;

* Camden has marked the commencement of this custom in the reign of Henry IV., and he has been followed by all our writers on heraldry and titles of honor, except Anstis, who endeavours to trace it to the reign of Edward I. Anstis mistook the matter entirely. Undoubtedly many instances may be met with in earlier times when knights were created with the full ceremonies of oblation of the sword at the altar, of bathing, &c.; and in strictness all knights should have been created in that manner. Whenever Anstis met with a knight inaugurated in that way, he called him a knight of the Bath. Now the question is, at what time was the first royal marriage, royal christening, or other festivity, when knights were made? — made, not exactly for military objects, not in consequence of feudal tenure, but in honour of the event which they were celebrating. Knights of the Bath were knights of peace, knights of compliment and courtesy. Camden's opinion was founded on the following passage in Froissart: "The vigil before the coronation (of Henry IV.) was on the evening of Saturday; on that occasion, and at that time, there watched all the esquires who were the next morning to be created knights, to the number of forty-six. Each of them had his esquire attending him, a separate chamber, and a separate bath, where the rites of bathing were that night performed. On the day following, the Duke of Lancaster (Henry IV.), at the time of celebrating mass, created them knights, giving them

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and at the coronation of his son this feature of our ancient manners was fully displayed.

The King, with a noble and numerous train of lords spiritual and temporal, left his palace at Kingston-upon-Thames, and rode at a soft pace towards London. He was met and greeted by a countless throng of earls, barons, knights, squires, and other men of landed estate and consideration; and as he approached the city, a solemn procession of its clergy, and a gorgeous train of its merchants and tradesmen, hailed his approach. The King was conducted with every mark of honour to the Tower, where about fifty gallant young gentlemen of noble birth were waiting in expectation of receiving the honour of knighthood from the King, on occasion of the august ceremony of his coronation. The

long green coats, the sleeves whereof were cut straight, and furred with minever, and with great hoods or chaperons furred in the same manner, and after the fashion used by prelates. And every one of these knights, on his left shoulder, had a double cordon or string of white silk, to which white tassels were pendent." Now there is nothing in this passage which can lead the mind to think that the coronation of Henry IV. was the first occasion when knights of the Bath were created; and, therefore, our writers on heraldry and titles of honor are not justified in the positiveness with which they always head their dissertations on knighthood of the Bath with the year 1399.

sovereign feasted his lords in the Tower; and these young candidates for chivalry, in testimony that they should not be compellable at any future time to perform the like service in the habit of esquires, served up the dishes at this royal festival according to the usage of chivalry in England; and immediately after the entertainment they retired to an apartment where dukes, earls, barons, and honourable knights, as their counsellors or directors, instructed them upon their behaviour, when they should become knights of the venerable order of the Bath.

The young candidates, according to custom, went into the baths prepared severally for them, performing their vigils and the other rites and exercises of chivalric practice. Much of the night was passed in watching and prayer, the rest they slept away in rich golden beds. They arose on the first appearance of the next morning's dawn; and, after giving their beds to the domestic servants of the King's household, as their customary fee, they proceeded to hear mass. Their devotions concluded, they clad themselves in rich silk mantles, to whose left shoulders were attached a double cordon or strings of white silk, from which white tassels were pendent. This addition to the mantle was not regarded as a decoration, but a badge of gentle shame, which the knight was obliged to wear until some

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high emprise had been achieved by him. The proud calls of his knighthood were remissible, however, by his lady-love; for a fair and noble damsel could remove this stigma from his shoulder, at her own sweet will; for there were no limits to woman's power in the glorious days of chivalry.*

The young soldiers mounted noble war-steeds and rode to the gate of the royal palace, where, dismounting, each of them was supported by two knights, and conducted with all proper marks of honour and respect into the presence of the King, who, sitting in royal magnificence, the throne being surrounded with the great officers of state, promoted them severally to the honour of knighthood. A great festival was then given in their honour, and they were permitted to sit down in their rich silk mantles in the King's presence; but they were not allowed to taste any part of the entertainment; for it was a feature in the simple manners of our ancestors,

* That the shoulder-knot of the knights of the Bath was worn only for a time, and on the principle of chivalry which induced men to place chains round their legs until they had performed some deeds of arms, I learn from Upton, a writer of great reputation in heraldic matters, who lived in the days of Henry VI. See his treatise *De Re Militari*, p. 10., quoted in the Appendix to Anstis's *History of the Knighthood of the Bath*.

that new made knights like new made wives ought to be scrupulously modest and abstemious.*

After the royal feast was done, the young cavaliers, divesting themselves of their mantles, put on rich robes ornamented with ensigns of dependence on the King. The next day, when the King rode to Westminster in much state and solemn order, all these young knights whom he had just honoured with the order of chivalry preceded him, riding with noble chevisance through the middle of the city; and so splendid was their appearance that the spectators (observes the old chronicler) seemed inebriated with joy.†

It is a pleasing and convincing proof of the chivalric spirit of Harry Monmouth, that he com-
manded Lydgate to translate into English the De-
struction of Troy, in order that the public mind
might be restored to its ancient military tone.
He wished that the remembrance of the valiant
dead should live, that the worthiness and prowess

Henry's
love of chi-
valric books

* Thus Chaucer :

“ A custom is unto these nobles all,
A bride shall not eaten in the hall,
Till days four, other three at the least
Ypassed be then let her go to feast.”

† MS. Norfolc. in Off. Arm. n. 15. See Anstis's Appendix to his History of the Knighthood of the Bath, p. 24.

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of the old chivalry and true knighthood should be remembered again. * Accordingly, the youth of England were on fire, and honour's thought reigned solely in the breast of every man.

“ They sell the pasture now to buy the horse ;
Following the mirror of all Christian kings,
With winged heels, as English Mercuries.
For now sits Expectation in the air,
And hides a sword, from heels unto the point,
With crowns imperial, crowns and coronets,
Promis'd to Harry and his followers.” †

His chi-
valric bear-
ing.

Certainly the march to Calais (after the taking of Harfleur) was never exceeded in heroic bravery by any imaginary exploit in romance. The attenuated condition of his army forbade all immediate prosecution of his ambitious aspirations for the French crown ; but a direct return to England did not accord with his high and courageous spirit ; and, treating the soil of France as if it were his own, he resolved to

* “ For to obeie without variaunce
My lordes byddyng fully and plesaunce
Whiche hath desire, sothly for to seyn
Of verray knyghthood, to remember agayn
The worthyness, gif I shall not lye,
And the prowesse of olde chivalrie.”

Lydgate, War of Troy.

† Henry V. Act ii. Chorus.

march to Calais. He professed neither desire nor fear to meet his enemies ; and he pursued his march with firm and grave steps, openly declaring to the French heralds the destination of his course. Political objects were suspended, but he secretly wished to raise the chivalric character of his people ; and he had numbers and vigour yet remaining to have a joust to the utterance with his enemies. As at Poitiers so at Agincourt, the yeomen divided with the knights of England the glory of the conquest : but the battle of Agincourt was in itself more heroic, for the English themselves were the assailants, instead of, as in the former battle, waiting the attack.

Henry's disdain of the wish of having more men from England, — his noble cry, " Banners, advance !" when his few thousands were ranged against all the proud chivalry of France, — his rendering himself conspicuous by his crown, his armour, and his splendid tunic, — his knighting some brave Welsh soldiers, his personal defenders, even as they lay expiring ; — these circumstances, vouched for, as they are, by the most faithful chroniclers, apparently belong to the romance rather than to the history of chivalry.

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After the battle he was as courteous * to his noble prisoners as the Black Prince had been on a similar occasion; and there was something very beautiful in his not permitting his battered helmet, with its royal crown, to be exhibited during the customary show at his public entrance into London. †

* He was kind and courteous to them immediately after the battle, and indeed as long as their deportment merited his friendship. The Duke of Orleans and four other Princes of the blood royal were taken prisoners at the battle of Agincourt, and for a while lived on their parole. But when they forfeited the titles of knights and gentlemen, by endeavouring to deceive and betray Henry while he was negotiating with the parties that distracted France, he then removed them to close confinement in Pontefract castle; nor did they obtain their liberty for many years. A great outcry has been raised against Henry for his conduct in this instance,—for his not showing a chivalric deportment to men who had forfeited their honour.

† Thus the Chorus in Shakspeare's Henry V. addresses the audience:

“ So let him land,
And solemnly, see him set on to London.
So swift a pace hath thought, that even now
You may imagine him upon Blackheath.
When that his lords desire him, to have borne
His bruised helmet and his bended sword,
Before him through the city: he forbids it,
Being free from vainness and self-glorious pride;
Giving full trophy, signal, and ostent,
Quite from himself, to God.”

Henry V. was the last of our chivalric kings. Though he revived the fame of Edward III. and the Black Prince, yet immediately after his reign the glories of English chivalry began to wane.

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II.

Commence-
ment of the
decline of
chivalry.

In our subsequent wars in France, indeed, there were among our nobility many knightly spirits, — the Warwicks, the Talbots, the Suffolks, the Salisburys, all worthy to have been the paladins of Charlemagne, the knights of Arthur's Round Table. But they went not with the character of the age; they opposed, rather than reflected it. Chivalry was no longer a national feature in our wars when there was no sovereign to fan the flame.

Henry VI. was a devotee, and Edward IV. a voluptuary. The civil wars in England operated as fatally upon the noble order of knighthood as the civil wars in France had done in that country. In those contests, far fiercer than national hostilities, there was a ruthlessness of spirit that mocked the gentle influences of chivalry. Accordingly it was asked, in the time of Edward IV., “How many knights are there now in England that have the use and exercise of a knight? that is to say, that he knoweth his horse, and his horse him, ready to a point to have all things that belongeth to a knight; a horse that is according and broken after its

The civil
wars.

Caxton's
lamentation.

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kind, his armour and harness meet and fitting.” *

“ I would,” continues the father of English printing, “ it pleased our sovereign lord that twice or thrice in a year he would cry jousts of peace, to the end that every knight should have horse and harness, and also the use and craft of a knight ; and also to tourney, one against one, or two against two, and the best to have a prize, a diamond or jewel. The exercises of chivalry are not used and honoured as they were in ancient time, when the noble acts of the knights of England that used chivalry were renowned through the universal world. O ye knights of England, where is the custom and usage of noble chivalry ? What do ye now but go to the bairns and play at dice ? Alas ! what do ye but sleep and take ease, and are all disordered from chivalry ? Leave this, leave it, and read the noble volumes of St. Graal, of Launcelot, of Tristrem, of Galaad, of Perceval, of Perceforest, of Gawayn, and many more. There shall ye see manhood, courtesy, and gentleness.” †

To this testimony of the decline of chivalry must be added the important fact that in 1439 people petitioned parliament for liberty to com-

* Caxton, of the Order of Chivalry or Knyghthood.

† Ibid.

mute by a pecuniary fine the obligation to receive knighthood. This change of manners did not occur, as is generally supposed, in consequence of the use of gunpowder ; for during the civil wars in England artillery was seldom and but partially used in the field, and, except at the great battle of Tewkesbury, in the year 1471, that arm of power had no effect on the general issue of battles. The cavalry and infantry were arranged in the old system : the lance was the weapon of those of gentle birth, while the bow and the bill were used by people of inferior state. Comines, who wrote about the close of the fifteenth century, says, that the archers formed the main strength of a battle.*

Though the civil wars had injured, they had not altogether destroyed the spirit of chivalry. There was yet enough of it remaining among the people to have borne its old shape and appearance, if England had once more been possessed of a Black Prince or a Harry Monmouth. But we had no such sovereign ; and the increasing use of gunpowder effectually prevented the return of chivalric customs in battle. The feelings of a nation are reflected in its literature ; and we find that the taste of the English people was altogether in favour of romances and histories of chi-

* Comines, vol. i. p. 31.

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He exaggerates the evil.

valry, as Caxton's various publications prove. The declamation of Caxton against the degeneracy of the age, which has been already cited, must not be interpreted literally in all its points. Romance writers, like moralists, had before praised the past at the expence of the present times. So early as the thirteenth century, Thomas of Erceldoune, called the Rhymer, had bewailed the depravity of his contemporaries, and had likened the degeneracy of his age to the change which the approaching winter must produce upon the appearance of the fields and groves.

“ This semly somers day,
In winter it is nought sen :
This greves (groves), waxen al gray,
That in her time were grene ;
So dos this world I say,
Y wis and nought at wene ;
The gode bene al oway,
That our elders have bene
To abide.” *

Caxton's mind was full of the high interest of chivalry, and it was very natural of him to lament that the same enthusiasm did not warm the hearts of others. But he must have considered the feelings of chivalry as dormant, and

* Sir Tristrem, Scott's edition, Fytte first. st. 2.

not extinct, or he would never have addressed the public in the manner he did at the close of his preface to his edition of the romances relating to Arthur and the knights of the Round Table. He printed the work, he says, "to the intent that noble men may see and learn the noble acts of chivalry, the gentle and virtuous deeds that some knights used in those days, by which they came to honour, and how they that were vicious were punished, and oft put to shame and rebuke, humbly beseeching all noble lords and ladies, with all other estates of what estate or degree they be of, that shall see and read in this said book and work, that they take the good and honest acts in their remembrance, and to follow the same. Wherein they shall find many joyous and pleasant histories, and many noble and renowned acts of humanity, gentleness, and chivalry. For herein may be seen noble chivalry, courtesy, humanity, friendliness, hardiness, love, friendship, cowardice, murder, hate, virtue, and sin. Do after the good and leave the evil, and it shall bring you to good fame and renommée."

His question, how many knights of England were there in England that had the use and exercise of chivalry, could have been answered by many accomplished cavaliers. The King, at the very time when Caxton wrote, was giving licences

Many gallant English knights.

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to his subjects to progress into foreign countries, and perform feats of arms ; and foreign princes, barons, and knights, came into England, under royal protection, to grace our tilts and tournaments.* Every marriage, and other interesting circumstances in the lives of the nobility, was celebrated by knightly shows in honour of arms and of the ladies.

The forms of chivalry appeared more splendid than before, as chivalry approached its downfall. Henry VII., the least warlike of our sovereigns, created knights with remarkable brilliancy of ceremony ; and the jousts and tournaments in the days of his son and successor would have graced the best ages of chivalry. But Henry VIII. had none of the virtues of a true knight, and his conduct to his wives was any thing but chivalric.† He displayed his great strength and activity of person in the tournament, because that amusement was one of English custom, but he would as readily have engaged in any other exercise more strictly gymnastic. He affected, however, to joust from true feelings of knighthood ; for he used on these occasions to wear on his head a lady's sleeve full of diamonds. He was as fa-

Character
of Henry
VIII. with
reference to
chivalry.

* Rymer's *Fœdera*.

† Warton pleasantly observes, that had Henry never murdered his wives, his politeness to the fair sex would remain unimpeached.

mous for his tournaments as Edward III. had been for his battles. In many of the early years of his reign he was perpetually breaking spears, or fighting at barriers with a two-handed sword, and to his rank, if not to his skill, the prize was generally adjudged. But his skill was sometimes undoubted; for, like the knights of old, he occasionally fought in disguise*, and yet conquered; and he encountered, with similar success, men of other countries who, for various reasons of affairs or pleasure, travelled to England.

The jousts and tournaments in the days of Henry VIII. are extremely interesting, as reflecting a state of manners different from those of earlier times. Tournaments were no longer simple representations of chivalry, but splendid pageants were united to them.

* Holingshed, p. 805, 806, &c. Henry's passion for disguising himself was singular, and carried him beyond the bounds of chivalric decorum. "Once on a time the King in person, accompanied by the Earls of Essex, Wiltshire, and other noblemen, to the number of twelve, came suddenly in the morning into the Queen's chamber, all apparelled in short coats of Kentish kendall, with hoods on their heads, and hose of the same, every one of them carrying his bow and arrow, and a sword and a buckler, like outlaws, or Robin Hood's men. Whereat the Queen, the ladies, and all other there were abashed, as well for the strange sight, as also for their sudden coming,—and after certain dances and pastimes made, they departed." Holingshed p. 805.

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II.Tournaments in
his reign.

In June, 1512, a solemn tournament was kept at Greenwich, the King and Sir Charles Brandon undertaking to abide all comers. To this goodly show the ladies were the first that approached, dressed in white and red silk, and seated upon horses, the colours of whose trappings corresponded with those of the ladies' dresses. A fountain curiously made of russet satin, having eight mouths spouting water, then followed. Within this piece of splendour and ingenuity sat a knight armed at all points. The next person in the procession was a lady covered with black silk dropped with fine silver, riding on a courser barded in a similar manner. A knight in a horse-litter then followed. When the fountain arrived at the tilting ground, the ladies rode round the lists, and so did the fountain, and the knight within the litter. Two goodly coursers caparisoned for the jousts then were introduced. The two knights left the fountain and the litter and mounted them, the surprised spectators beholding the King and Sir Charles Brandon.

The challenge to all comers was then proclaimed by the heralds; and while the trumpets were sounding all the inspiring notes of chivalry, at one end of the lists entered Sir Thomas Knevet in a castle of coal black, and over the castle was written 'The dolorous Castle.' The Earl of Essex, the Lord Howard, and other

knights splendidly attired, then pricked into the lists, and with Sir Thomas encountered the King and Sir Charles Brandon. The details of the tournament have not been recorded ; the chronicler contenting himself with observing, that the King broke most spears, and that the prize fell to his lot.*

Henry displayed his joy at the birth of his son, Prince Arthur, by a solemn tournament. The court removed from Richmond to Westminster. The King himself determined to tourney, and he selected four knights to aid him. He styled himself "Cure Loial," the Lord William Earl of Devonshire was called "BonVoloire," Sir Thomas Knevet, "Bon Espoir," and Sir Edward Nevill chose for his tourneying name "Valiant Desire." These four noble spirits were called "Lès quatre chevaliers de la forrest Salvigne." Their names were written upon a goodly table, which was suspended from a tree, curiously wrought, the knights engaging to run at the tilt against all comers. Accordingly, by the prescribed time, a court in the palace was prepared for the games, and the Queen and her ladies were conducted to a gallery richly hung inside with cloth of gold, and on the outside with cloth of arras. A pageant preceded the sports of chivalry. It is

* Holingshed, p. 815.

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described as representing a forest, with rocks, hills, and vales, with trees, herbs, and flowers, made of green velvet, damask and silk. Six men clad as foresters stood at different parts; and in the midst of the forest was a castle apparently made of gold, and before the gate sat a gentleman splendidly apparelled, weaving a garland of roses for the prize. The spectators imagined that the pageant was drawn into the court by a lion and an antelope, who were led by men in the guise of savages. When the pageant rested before the Queen, the foresters blew their horns, and from different parts of the forest the four knights issued armed at all points and mounted on their war-steeds. Each knight carried his lance, a plume of feathers surmounted his crest, and his name was embroidered on the bases of gold which covered his horse. At the moment of these knights starting from the forest, and the court resounding with the noise of drums and trumpets, the Earl of Essex, the Lord Thomas Howard, and many other nobles, entered the court, and then the jousts commenced. But who deserved best that day the historian has not mentioned. The next afternoon the Queen repaired to her gallery; and instead of the King and his aids being introduced in a pageant, they entered the court under splendid pavilions of cloths of gold and velvet. On the other side of

the lists Sir Charles Brandon entered in the guise of a recluse or religious person, his horse being also caparisoned in the simplest form. No drum or other sound of minstrelsy ushered his approach ; but he slowly and silently advanced to the Queen, and presented to her a writing, whose effect was, that if she pleased he would tourney in her presence, but if it suited her not, he would depart as he came. The Queen smiled and bowed assent ; and Sir Charles, retiring to one end of the lists, threw aside the disguise of his splendid armour. The young Henry Guilford, enclosed in a device or a pageant made like a castle or turret, then approached the Queen, and obtained her leave to engage in the tilt. Next appeared the Marquis Dorset and Sir Thomas Bullen, like two pilgrims from Saint James, in tabards of black velvet, with palmers' hats on their helmets, with long Jacobs' staves in their hands, their horse-trappings of black velvet, the harness of men and steeds being set with scallop shells of fine gold and strips of black velvet, every strip being also adorned with golden scallop shells. Next came the Lord Henry of Buckingham, Sir Giles Capell, and many other knights. The sports then commenced, and as on the preceding day the King won the prize. In the evening the ambassadors and the nobility supped with the royal family, and after the

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banquet the King with the Queen and lords and ladies entered the white-hall of the palace. Songs, dancing, and minstrels, succeeded, and in the midst of the merriment the King retired unseen. Soon afterwards the trumpets at the end of the hall began to sound, and a pageant upon wheels was brought in. A gentleman richly attired descended from it, and approaching the Queen in a supplicatory attitude, told her that in a garden of pleasure there was an arbour of gold wherein were lords and ladies much desirous to show pastime to the Queen and court, if they might be permitted so to do. The Queen replied, that she was very desirous to see them and their pastime. A cloth of arras was therefore drawn from the front of the pageant, and rich representations of nature saluted the eye. Six ladies, dressed with more bravery than the dull chronicler can describe, were seen in the arbour, supported by the King and five gallant knights. The whole scene appeared one blaze of gold. After the applause which this splendour elicited had subsided, the lords and ladies descended from the pageant, the minstrels sounded their music of gaiety, and the whole court mixed in the dance. And the people, too, had their amusement; for some portion of the simplicity of ancient times remained, and royalty was not thought to lose any thing of its dignity

by being presented to the public eye. The pageant was conveyed to the end of the palace, there to tarry till the dances were finished, and so to have received the lords and ladies again; but suddenly the rude and joyous people ran to it, and tore and rent and spoilt it; and the Lord Steward and his officers, seeing that they could not drive them away without a conflict and disturbance, suffered the pageant to be destroyed.*

The field of the cloth of gold has been so often described in works of ready access, that I should not be warranted in attempting to picture again its gay and sparkling scene. But some of its circumstances have not been sufficiently noticed; and they are so expressive of the chivalric feelings of the time that a history of chivalry would be imperfect without a description of them.

Field of the
cloth of
gold.

The whole ceremonial of the meeting between Henry VIII. and Francis I. was regulated by Cardinal Wolsey,

“One certes, that promised no element
In such a business.”

And the principle which guided this right reverend cardinal of York was political subtlety,

* Holingshed, p. 807, 808.

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and not knightly liberality. The English so-journed at Guisnes, the French at Ardres. On the morning of the first royal interview, the two kings and their numerous followers left their respective pavilions at the signal of a gun fired at Guisnes, and returned from Ardres. They slowly measured the way to the intermediate plain in the silence of apprehension ; for the cardinal's ungenerous suspicions had spread through either host. Once each party halted, expecting an attack ; and when the noise which occasioned the alarm died away, the procession recommenced its course, confident that the fears of the other side were greater than their own. The kings met, and so anxious were they to display their feelings of friendship that they embraced on horseback. They then dismounted, and having renewed their caresses, they went into a pavilion of golden cloth ; nor did they separate till dinner and familiar conversation had frozen the etiquette imposed on their manners by the cardinal.

The next morning the two Queens interchanged visits, and spent some hours in dancing and other amusements. These interchanges of courtesies warmed the minds of the two sovereigns to chivalric generousness. One morning Francis rode to Guisnes with scarcely any attendance. He walked through the English

guard, who drew back in astonishment, and he did not stop till he reached the chamber where his brother-monarch lay asleep. Francis soon awoke him; and Henry, immediately comprehending his motives, declared, in the spirit and language of chivalry, that he yielded himself his prisoner, and plighted his faith. He then threw round Francis's neck a collar of great value, and Francis gave him a bracelet of superior worth, each king entreating the other to wear the gift for his sake. The two monarchs then became brothers in arms; and with twelve companions undertook to deliver all persons at jousts, tourney, and barriers.

The chivalric exercises continued for five days, in the presence of the two queens and the nobility of England and France. French and English knights were the only part of the chivalry of Europe who answered the challenge: for chivalry could not then, as in former days, smooth down personal heats and feuds; and therefore no subject of the wide extended empire of Charles V. appeared on the field of the cloth of gold. The only weapons used were spears; but they were impelled with such vigour, as to be so often broken, that the spectators' eyes were scared with splinters. Each day the challengers varied their harness and devices, and each day the two

CHAP. kings ran together so valiantly that the beholders
 II. had great joy. *

“ Each following day
 Became the last day’s master, till the next
 Made former wonders it’s. * * *
 * * * * * The two kings,
 Equal in lustre, were now best, now worst,
 As presence did present them; him in eye,
 Still him in praise: and, being present both,
 ’Twas said, they saw but one; and no discerners
 Durst wag his tongue in censure. When these suns
 (For so they phrase ’em) by their heralds challenged
 The noble spirits to arms, they did perform
 Beyond thought’s compass; that former fabulous story,
 Being now seen possible enough, got credit,
 That Bevis was believed. †

There was a considerable portion of chivalry among the nobility of Henry VIII. In some respects, however, it partook more of the romance of the Troubadour than the genuine character of knighthood: for the tale that Lord Surrey travelled from court to court proclaiming the peerless beauty of his lady-love, and challenging all gainsayers to a joust *à l’outrance* is totally

* Holingshed, p. 85, &c.

† Shakspeare, Henry VIII. Act i. scene 1.

void of truth *; and it only appears that his Lordship fostered for the fair Geraldine a sentimental affection without distinct views. It was altogether a poet's dream; and the Italian muse, who was at that time worshipped in England, favoured such fond imaginings.

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II.

Introduc-
tion of
Italian literature fa-
voured ro-
mance.

Much of the literature of the time was chivalric. Every noble spirit loved the Knight's Tale of Chaucer. The French and Spanish stories of warriors and dames were transfused into English; as was the fine Chronicle of Froissart by Lord Berners at the command of the King; and the vigorous, rich, and picturesque style of our language in those days was admirably adapted for a history of the most brilliant age of knighthood. That the spirit of chivalry was not extinct in the reign of Henry VIII. is evident from this work of Lord Berners, for the ordinary diction of the day was used; and it was to the full as expressive of the gallantry and grace of the olden time as the original work itself.

Popularity
of chivalric
literature.

The education of our English gentry was nearly as chivalric then as at any previous period of our history. Boys were sent to school to

Chivalric
education of
nobility.

* Dr. Nott, in his life of Lord Surrey, prefixed to the works of His Lordship and Sir Thomas Wyatt, has by the evidence of facts completely overthrown this pleasing tale.

CHAP. learn to read at four years of age. At six they
 II.
 — were taught languages and the first principles of manners : from ten to twelve dancing and music were added to their accomplishments, and politeness was particularly encouraged. At fourteen they were initiated into the sports of the field which prepared them for the ruder exercise of arms. At sixteen they were taught to joust, to fight at the barriers, to manage the war-horse, to assail castles, to support the weight of armour, and to contend in feats of arms with their companions. And there their education terminated.*

* These curious particulars are to be gathered, as Dr. Nott remarks, from the following passage in Hardyng's Chronicle.

“ And as lords' sons been set, at four year age,
 At school to learn the doctrine of letture ;
 And after six to have them in language
 And sit at meet, seemly in all nurture :
 At ten and twelve to revel is their cure,
 To dance and sing, and speak of gentleness :
 At fourteen year they shall to field I sure,
 At hunt the deer, and catch at hardiness.

“ For deer to hunt and slay, and see them bleed
 An hardiment giveth to his courage.
 And also in his wit he giveth heed,
 Imagining to take them at advantage.
 At sixteen year to warry and to wage,
 To joust and ride and castles to assail,
 To skirmish als, and make sicker scourage,
 And set his watch for peril nocturnal.

When they went to battle they demeaned themselves worthy of their education.

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In all the military expeditions of the English on the Continent, the soldiers of either army were continually challenging each other to break a lance for their ladies' sake. Sir John Wallop, in his march with a British army to Landrecy, in the year 1543, went to the town of Terouenne, and, recollecting that the commandant was an old acquaintance, he addressed him in the true spirit of chivalry, that if there were any gentlemen under his charge willing to break a lance for their ladies' sake, six gentlemen should be sent from the English army to meet them. The challenge was accepted, the jousts were held, and, after this fine old chivalric mode of displaying his friendship, Sir John Wallop held on his course to Landrecy. *

English knights continued to break lances for ladies' love.

“ And every day his armour to essay,
In feats of arms with some of his meynie ;
His might to prove, and what that he do may
If that he were in such a jeopardy
Of war befall, that by necessity
He might algates with weapons him defend.
Thus should he learn in his priority
His weapons all, in armes to dispend.”

See to the same effect, the Paston letters, vol. iii. 34, 35, &c.

* This curious circumstance is mentioned in a journal of Sir John Wallop's expedition, which Dr. Nott dug out of the State-Paper Office. The whole passage is amusing.

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State of
Scottish
chivalry at
this period.

James IV.

The early part of the sixteenth century forms a very interesting æra of British chivalry ; for it introduces to our notice James IV. of Scotland, a hero both of knighthood and romance. He was as expert and graceful in tournaments and jousts as any cavalier who was the theme of history or poetry. On occasion of his marriage with Margaret of England, his chivalric shows were splendid beyond example. He was wont to personate King Arthur, or to take the title

“July 31. Wallop advances to Bettune. Passing by Terouenne, he attempts to draw out the garrison of that place, but fails. The French defeated in a skirmish. Wallop says, that he sent a letter to the commandant of Terouenne, an old acquaintance, that if he had any gentlemen under his charge, who would break a staff for their ladies' sake, he would appoint six gentlemen to meet them. The challenge is accepted, and the conditions are fixed. Mr. Howard, Peter Carew, Markham, Shelly of Calais, with his own two men, Cawverly and Hall, are the English appellants. They all acquit themselves gallantly at the jousts. Hall, at his first course, did break his staff galliardly, in the midst of the Frenchman's cuirass. Markham stroke another on his head-piece, and had like to have overthrown him. Peter Carew stroke his very well, and had one broken on him. Cawverly was reported to have made the fairest course ; but by the evil running of the Frenchman's horse, which fled out of the course, he was struck under the arm, and run through the body into the back, and taken into the town where he was well treated. I wish to God, said Wallop, the next kinsman I had, not being my brother, had excused him.”

and appearance of an imaginary creature, called the Savage Knight. His tilt-yards reflected the glories of the last king of the Britons, and the knights of the Round Table, or represented a wild and romantic country, with Highlanders clad in savage dresses guarding the barriers. Like a knight of the bye-gone time, he was a pilgrim as well as a soldier, and we will hope, for the purity of earlier days of chivalry, that his heroic predecessors did not often, like himself, turn aside from their pious peregrinations to wander amidst the bowers of castles, with ladies fair.

The romantic gallantry of his disposition was so well known, that cooler politicians used it to the purposes of their ambition. The French king, Louis XII., was abandoned by most of his allies, and was anxious to renew the ancient alliance of France with Scotland: yet England and Scotland were at that time at peace, and the two countries appeared to be united in friendship by the marriage of James with Margaret, the King of England's sister. But Louis knew the character of the man whose aid he required, and he played upon it with admirable dexterity. In 1504, he sent, as his ambassador to the Scottish court, Bernard Stuart, Lord of Aubigny, one of the most distinguished cavaliers of France. This envoy admirably supported the

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objects of his master: he soon won the affections of James, and his discourses on wars and tournaments disposed the King to love the chivalric French.

A few years afterwards Louis, still continuing to play on his chivalric feelings, made his wife, Anne of Brittany, choose James for her knight and champion, to protect her from all her enemies. The idea of winning by this scheme the Scottish King to the purposes of France originated with Andrew Forman, Bishop of Moray, the Scottish ambassador at Paris, who, to promote his own aggrandisement, would have sacrificed king and country. * The agent of the scheme was La Motte, the French ambassador at Edinburgh, who was as skilful as his martial predecessor, the Lord of Aubigny, in flattering James to his ruin. He presented him letters from the French Queen, wherein, taking the style of a high-born damsel in distress, she termed him her knight, and, assuring him she had suffered much blame in defence of his honor, she beseeched him to advance but three steps into the English territory with his army, for the sake of his mistress. These letters were accompanied by a present of 14,000 crowns, and a ring from her own

* Pinkerton's History of Scotland, vol. ii. p. 85, &c.

finger.* The chivalry and vanity of James were roused by these appeals, and he became the willing tool of French ambition.

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The circumstances which succeeded his allying himself with France fall not within my province to detail. The battle of Flodden Field was their crown and conclusion; and although there was nothing chivalric in the battle itself, yet a few matters which preceded it come within my subject. Indeed, in the times regarding which I am writing, chivalry was no longer a national distinction, and therefore cannot be marked in public affairs; its lights fell only upon a few individuals.

On the fifth of September, the Earl of Surrey†, who commanded the English forces, dispatched

Chivalric
circum-
stances at
Flodden.

* Drummond, 140, &c. Buchanan, xiii. 25.

“For the fair Queen of France
Sent him a turquois ring and glove,
And charged him, as her knight and love,
For her to break a lance;
And strike three strokes with Scottish brand,
And march three miles on Southron land,
And bid the banners of his band
In English breezes dance.
And thus, for France’s Queen he drest
His manly limbs in mailed vest.”

Marmion, canto v.

† He was afterwards Duke of Norfolk, and great grandfather of the Earl of Surrey, who was mentioned by me in p. 114. ante.

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a herald from Alnwick to the Scottish camp, offering James battle on a particular day, (Friday, the 9th of September, 1513,) and James, like a gallant knight, accepted the challenge. He then removed his camp from Ford*, and took a strong position on the ridge of Flodden hill, "one of the last and lowest eminences detached from the ridge of Cheviot." On the sixth the English reached Wooller-haugh, a place within three miles of the Scottish camp, and, observing the admirable position of the foe, the Earl of Surrey formed a scheme which, he hoped, would make them relinquish their advantage. Knowing the King's undaunted courage, and high sense of honour, he wrote a letter, subscribed by himself and all the great men in his army, reproaching him for having changed his ground, after he had accepted the offer of battle, and challenging him to descend, like a

* It has been generally thought that James, forgetting both his own wife and the Queen of France, lost much time at Ford, in making love to a Lady Heron, while his natural son, the Archbishop of St. Andrew's, was the paramour of Miss Heron the daughter. Dr. Lingard (*History of England*, vol. vi. p. 31. n.) seems inclined to doubt this tale, because James had only six days to take three castles and a fair lady's heart. What time was absolutely necessary for these sieges and assaults, the learned Doctor has not stated. However, to speak seriously, the story has no foundation in truth; and it only arose from the beauty of Lady Heron, and the reputed gallantry of the Scottish King.

brave and honourable prince, into the spacious vale of Millfield, that lay between the two armies, and there decide the quarrel on fair and equal terms.* This scheme failed; for James was not at that moment so ridiculously romantic as to forego an advantage which his skill had obtained; and he only replied that he should expect the English on the day appointed for battle. Surrey would have been mad to have attacked him in his present position; and he, therefore, on the morning of the 8th of September, formed his army into marching order, crossed the Till near Wooller, progressed towards Berwick, and rested at Barmore wood. The Scottish nobles apprehended that it was the intention of the English to plunder the fertile country of the Merse; and they therefore importuned James to march to the defence of his own dominions: but the King declined, alleging that his honour was engaged to remain in his present station until the morrow, which was the appointed time for battle. On that morrow Surrey directed his course to the Tweed; but, suddenly changing his line of march, he re-passed the Till at the bridge of Twissel. Before the army had entirely passed, Robert Borthwick,

* Henry's History of Great Britain, book vi. ch. 1. part ii. s. 1.

CHAP. the commander of James's artillery, entreated
 II. — the permission of his sovereign to destroy the bridge, and thus break the enemy's force; but the King gave a stern denial, declaring that he wished to have all his enemies before him, and to fight them fairly. * By this fatal folly James lost all the advantages of his position; for the English formed behind him, and Flodden was open and accessible to them. If personal bravery, independent of sageness, had been the character of a knight, James deserved all chivalric honours; for, disdaining the counsel to behold the battle afar off, he mingled boldly in the thickest of the press. The field was won by the English archers; but James did not live to repent the enthusiasm of his chivalry, which had cost his country so much blood, for he was killed within a lance's length of Lord Surrey. The romantic chivalry of James was deeply injurious to Scotland. She had, in his reign, attained a considerable eminence of national prosperity, but the defeat at Flodden hurled her from her station. The country was "left a prey to foreign influence and intrigue, which continued till it ceased to form a separate kingdom: her finances were exhausted, her leaders corrupted, her dignity degraded, her commerce and her agriculture neglected." †

* Pitscottie, p. 116, &c.

† Pinkerton, book xiii.

CHAP. III.

THE LAST YEARS OF CHIVALRY IN ENGLAND.

*The Chivalric Feelings of the Nation supported by Spenser
and by Sir Philip Sidney.....Allusions to Sidney's
 Life particularly his kindly Consideration
 Chivalric Politeness of the Age of Elizabeth.....The
 Earl of Oxford.....Tilts in Greenwich Park.....Sir
 Henry Lee.....Chivalry reflected in the popular Amuse-
 ments.....Change of Manners.....Reign of James the
 First.....Tournaments ceased on Prince Henry's Death
Life of Lord Herbert of Cherbury.....Chivalric
 Fame of his Family.....His Character.....His Infe-
 riority to the Knights of yore.....Decline of Chivalric
 Education.....Important Change in Knighthood by the
 Parliament of Charles the First.....Application of
 Chivalric Honors to Men of civil Station.....Knights
 made in the Field.....Carpet Knights.....Knights of
 the Bath.....Full Account of the Ancient Ceremonies of
 creating Knights of the Bath.*

THE reigns of Edward VI. and Mary present nothing to our purpose; but the Elizabethan age is fraught with interest. Our continued intercourse with Italy promoted anew the love for romance and allegory which religious controversy had for some years been gradually

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 The chivalric feelings of the nation supported by Spenser,

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stifling. Though classical literature had revived in Italy, the muse of chivalry was most fondly worshipped, and the mind delighted to wander amidst the enchanted garden of Armida. Our well-travelled ancestors brought home with them the love for romantic poetry and allegory; and Spenser's genius, influenced by the prevailing taste of his day, chose Ariosto for his model, and painted the wild adventures of heroes and ladies. Chivalry was the supposed perfection of man's moral nature; and the English poet, therefore, described the chief private virtues exemplified in the conduct of knights: it being his wish, as he expressed his mind to Sir Walter Raleigh, to fashion a gentleman or noble person in valorous and gentle discipline. His principal hero, he in whom the image of a brave knight was perfected in the twelve moral virtues, was King Arthur; and the poet freely used the circumstances and sentiments in the romances relating to that British hero, and also the other popular tales of chivalry.

and Sir
Philip Sid-
ney.

If poetry nourished the love of valorous knight-hood, learning was equally its friend; and when Spenser addressed Sidney as the noble and virtuous gentleman, and most worthy of all titles of learning and chivalry, he spoke the feeling of his age, that the accomplishments of the mind were best displayed in martial demeanour. At

the birth of Sidney, as Ben Jonson says, all the muses met. In reading the *Arcadia*, it is impossible to separate the author from the work, or to think that he has not poured forth all those imaginings of his fancy which his heart had marked for its own. He has portrayed knights and damsels valiant and gentle, placing all their fond aspirations of happiness in a rural life, and despising the pageantry of courts for the deep harmonies of nature. But Sidney's mind was chivalric as well as romantic; and he was so fond of reverting to the fabled ages of his country, that it was his intention to turn all the stories of the *Arcadia* into the admired legends of Arthur and his knights.* To modern taste the *Arcadia* of Sir Philip Sidney presents no charms: yet, by a singular contradiction, the author, who was the personification of his book, is regarded as the model of perfection.

“ The plume of war ! with early laurels crown'd,
The lover's myrtle, and the poet's bay.” †

The popularity, however, of the *Arcadia*, in the Elizabethan age ‡, and the high reputation

* So reported in the conversation of Ben Jonson and Drummond of Hawthornden.

† Thomson's *Seasons*. Summer, l. 1511.

‡ The *Arcadia* was popular so late as the days of Charles I., as may be learned from a passage in the work of a snarling

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III.Allusions
to his life.

of the author, showed the sympathy of the world in those days for the romance of chivalry.

The few circumstances in the brief life of Sidney are too well known for me to be justified in detailing them : but I may remind my readers that he was born at Penshurst in Kent, in the year 1544 ; that he was accomplished in literature and chivalry by study and travel ; that he was a courtier of Elizabeth, and yet could oppose her dearest fancies, if they were hostile to the interests of his country ; that his opposition to her projected union with Anjou was spirited and well reasoned ; that his love for his sister and his wife was the softening grace of that desire for chivalric valour which carried him with his uncle the Earl of Leicester to the plains of Flanders, in the year 1586 ; and when he received his mortal wound before the town of Zutphen, that he resigned a cup of water to the poor soldier whose lot he thought was more distressing than his own. His courage, his gal-

satirist, who wanted to make women mere square-elbowed family drudges. " Let them learn plain works of all kind, so they take heed of too open seaming. Instead of songs and musick, let them learn cockerie and laundrie ; and instead of reading Sir Philip Sydney's *Arcadia*, let them read the *Grounds of Good Huswifery*. I like not a female poetess at any hand." *Powell's Tom of all Trades*, p. 47.

lantry, and grace were his best known qualities, and those for which England and, indeed, Europe, lamented his death. His funeral in St. Paul's was a national one, the first instance in our history of honours of that description; and for many months afterwards not an individual in the court or city appeared in public, except in a garment of black: — in such high account were chivalric virtues held in the days of Elizabeth.

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One feature of his character but little noticed by modern writers was very remarkable in those days, and will be better valued now than it was then. All who enjoyed the hospitality of Penshurst were equal in the consideration of the host: there were no odious distinctions of rank or fortune; “the dishes did not grow coarser as they receded from the head of the table,” and no huge salt-cellar divided the noble from the ignoble guests.*

Particularly
his kindly
consider-
ation.

* This was the honourable distinction of the Sidney family in general, as we learn from Ben Jonson's lines on Penshurst.

“Whose liberal board doth flow
With all that hospitality doth know!
Where comes no guest but is allow'd to eat,
Without his fear, and of thy Lord's own meat.
Where the same beer and bread, and self-same wine,
That is His Lordship's, shall be also mine.”

Gifford's Ben Jonson, vol. viii. p. 254.

The

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Chivalric
politeness of
the age of
Elizabeth.

The Earl of
Oxford.

The polite gracefulness of Sidney was not rare in his time ; and there was not a courtier, who, if placed in similar circumstances to those of Sir Walter Raleigh, that would not have cast his handsome plush cloak in the mire to serve for the Queen, as a foot-cloth. Tournaments as well masks were the amusements of the age. The prize was always delivered by Elizabeth who never thought that age could deprive her of the privileges of beauty. Edward Vere Earl of Oxford was more skilful in these manly exercises of chivalry than all the other courtiers, even than Sidney, who, like a magnanimous knight, was eloquent in his praise.

“ Having this day my horse, my hand, my lance,
Guided so well that I obtained the prize,
Both by the judgment of the English eyes,
And of some sent from that sweet en’my France :
Horsemen my skill in horsemanship advance,

The practice of making a distinction at the table by means of a salt-cellar was very proper in early times, when the servants as well as the master of a family with his wife and children dined at one long table. It became odious, however, when a baron made this mark of servility separate his gentle from his noble friends. This was feudal pride, whereas chivalric courtesy would rather have placed the guests in generous equality about a round table.

Townsfolks my strength; a daintier judge applies
 His praise to sleight, which from good use doth rise :
 Some lucky wits impute it but to chance,
 Others, because of both sides I do take
 My blood from them who did excel in this,
 Think nature me a man of arms did make.
 How far they shoot awry ! The true cause is,
 STELLA look'd on, and from her heavenly face
 Sent forth the beams which made so fair my race."

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Astrophel and Stella, st. 41.

The friendship of Sidney for him for awhile was the only circumstance which we know to his honour, and it implies the possession of virtuous qualities in the Earl. A considerable portion of coxcombry belonged to most of Elizabeth's courtiers; and the noble Lord in question was distinguished according to Stow, for introducing into this country embroidered and perfumed gloves.

The Queen's band of gentlemen-pensioners formed a perfect illustration of the chivalric principle of the dignity of obedience, for it was the highest ambition of the nobility to be enrolled among them. Their tilts in Greenwich Park would have done honour to the brightest days of chivalry. But still more select were the knights-tilters, a fraternity founded on the gallant resolve of Sir Henry Lee to appear in

Tilts in
 Greenwich
 Park.

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the royal tilt-yard on the anniversary of the Queen's birth in honour of Her Majesty. Some of these knights were preux chevaliers indeed. The Queen's glove accidentally dropped from her hand during a tournament, and the Earl of Cumberland had the good fortune to recover it. Fancying herself some dame of chivalry, she desired the Earl to retain it; and he with a gallant spirit, regarding it as the favour of a lady, had it set in diamonds, and always wore it on festival occasions in the high crowned hats which had superseded the helmet. For so polite was the court of Elizabeth, that

‘ Ne any there doth brave or valiant seem,
Unless that same gay mistress’ badge he wear, *

Sir Henry
Lee.

From 1571 to 1590 Sir Henry Lee was the Queen's champion; and being then worn down with age and infirmity, he resigned his office to the Earl of Cumberland. The ceremony is admirably expressive of the romantic feeling of the time and the vanity of Elizabeth. It was partly a mask and partly a chivalric show. On the 17th of November, 1590, Sir Henry Lee and the Earl, having performed their services in arms, presented themselves to the Queen at the

* Spenser, *Colin Clout's come Home again*.

foot of the stairs under her gallery-window in the tilt-yard, Westminster, where Her Majesty was seated, surrounded by the French ambassador, her ladies, and the chief nobility. Soft music then saluted the ears of the Queen, and one of the royal singers chaunted these lines :

“ My golden locks time hath to silver turn’d,
 (Oh time too swift, and swiftness never ceasing !)
 My youth ’gainst age, and age at youth hath spurn’d;
 But spurn’d in vain, youth waneth by increasing:
 Beauty, strength, and youth, flowers fading been,
 Duty, faith, and love, are roots, and evergreen.

“ My helmet now shall make a hive for bees;
 And lovers’ songs shall turn to holy psalms:
 A man at arms must now sit on his knees,
 And feed on prayers that are old age’s alms.
 And so from court to cottage I depart:
 My saint is sure of mine unspotted heart.

“ And when I sadly sit in homely cell,
 I’ll teach my swains this carol for a song:
 ‘ Blest be the hearts that think my sovereign well:
 Curs’d be the souls that think to do her wrong.’
 Goddess! vouchsafe this aged man his right,
 To be your beadsman now that was your knight.”

A pageant of a temple of the vestal virgins rose out of the earth. Certain rich gifts were taken from the altar by the attending virgins, and with

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a votive tablet, inscribed "To Eliza," was presented to the Queen. Sir Henry Lee offered his armour before a crowned pillar at the temple-gate, and then presented the Earl of Cumberland to the Queen, humbly beseeching her to accept him as her knight to continue the yearly exercises. Her Majesty having accepted this offer, the aged knight armed the Earl and mounted him on his horse. He threw over his own person a gown of black velvet, and covered his head in lieu of a helmet with a bonnet of the country fashion. *

Chivalry reflected in
the popular
amusements.

The popular amusements of England corresponded with those of the court. "I remember at Mile-end-Green, when I lay at Clement's Inn, I was Sir Dagonet in Arthur's show," is the avowal of Master Shallow; and thus while tournaments were held by the court and nobility, other classes of society diverted themselves with scenic representations of the ancient chivalry. The recreations of the common people at Christmas and bridals, an author of the time assures us, consisted in hearing minstrels sing or recite stories of old times, as the tale of Sir Topas, the Reportes of Bevis of Southampton, Guy of Warwick, Adam Bell, and Clymme of

* Nicholls's Progresses of Queen Elizabeth, vol. iii. p. 41, &c.

the Clough, and other old romances or historical rhymes. And in another place the same author speaks of companies that were desirous to hear of old adventures, and valiances of noble knights in times past.* The domestic amusements of the age are thus enumerated by Burton: "The ordinary recreations which we have in winter are cards, tables and dice, shovel-board, chess-play, the philosopher's game, small trunks, balliards, music, masks, singing, dancing, ule games, catches, purposes, questions; *merry tales of errant knights*, kings, queens, lovers, lords, ladies, giants, dwarfs, thieves, fairies, goblins, friars, witches, and the rest.†

In one respect, however, manners underwent a great and distinct change. In a former chapter, it was mentioned that the Italians invented the long and pointed sword; and it seems from

Change of
manners.

* Puttenham, *Arte of English Poesie*, book ii. c. 9. & 19.

† Burton, *Anatomy of Melancholy*, p. 271. This passage brings to mind a corresponding one in Wilson's *Arte of Rhetorique*, printed in 1553. "If there be any old tale or strange history, well and wittily applied to some man living, all men love to hear it. As if one were called Arthur, some good fellow that were well acquainted with King Arthur's book, and the knights of his Round Table, would want no matter to make good sport, and for a need would dub him knight of the Round Table, or else prove him to be one of his kin, or else (which were much) prove him to be Arthur himself."

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many scattered allusions to customs in works of continental history, that it gradually superseded the use of the broader weapons of knighthood. In Elizabeth's reign the foreign or Italian rapier was a very favorite weapon. "Sword-and-buckler fight begins to grow out of use," is the lament of a character in an old comedy. "I am sorry for it. I shall never see good manhood again. If it be once gone, this poking fight of rapier and dagger will come up, then a tall man, and a good sword-and-buckler man will be spitted like a cat or rabbit."* The allusions to this state of manners are more marked and numerous in Ben Jonson's "Every Man in his Humour," but with that comedy my readers are of course familiar.

For some of the early years of James I. tournaments divided with masks the favour of the court. As soon as Prince Henry reached his sixteenth year, he put himself forth in a more

* "The Two angry Women of Abingdon." The sword and buckler fighting was the degeneracy of the ancient chivalry; and Smithfield, which had shone as the chief tilting ground of London, was in the sixteenth century, according to Stow, "called Ruffians' Hall," by reason it was the usual place of frays and common fighting, during the time that sword and bucklers were in use. When every *serving-man*, from the base to the best, carried a *buckler* at his back, which hung by the hilt or pommel of his sword." Alas, for the honor of chivalry!

heroic manner than was usual with princes of his time, by tiltings, barriers, and other exercises on horseback, the martial discipline of gentle peace.* After his death chivalric sports fell quite out of fashion.

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Tourna-
ments
ceased on
Prince
Henry's
death.

“ Shields and swords
Cobwebb'd and rusty ; not a helm affords
A spark of lustre, which were wont to give
Light to the world, and make the nation live.” †

This was the lamentation of Ben Jonson ; and another poet thus describes, in the person of Britannia, the feelings of the nation :

“ Alas ! who now shall grace my tournaments,
Or honour me with deeds of chivalry ?
What shall become of all my merriments,
My ceremonies, shows of heraldry,
And other rites ?” ‡

Military exercises being entirely disused, the mask, with its enchantments of music, poetry, painting, and dancing, was the only amusement of the court and nobility.

And now in these last days of chivalry in England a very singular character appeared upon

Life of
Lord Cher-
bury.

* Wilson's Life of James, p. 52.

† Ben Jonson, Masque of Prince Henry's Barriers.

‡ G. Wither. Prince Henry's Obsequies. El. 31.

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the scene. This was Edward Herbert, afterwards Lord Herbert of Cherbury, who was born at Eaton, in Shropshire, in the year 1581. His family were of the class of gentry, and had for many years executed various royal offices of military trust. His grandfather was a staunch royalist in the days of Edward VI., and Queen Mary ; and he gained fortune, as well as fame : for it appears that his share of plunder in the wars in the north, and of the forfeited estates of rebels, was the foundation of the family wealth.

Chivalric
fame of his
family.

The valour of the Herberts rivalled that of the romantic heroes of chivalry. Edward has proudly reverted to his great-great grandfather, Sir Richard Herbert of Colebrook, as an incomparable hero, who twice passed through a great army of northern men alone, with his pole-axe in his hand, and returned without any mortal hurt. The courage which had been formerly displayed in the battle-field was, as times degenerated, reserved for private wrongs, and the patriot sank into the duellist. At the close of his life, Edward recollected, with pleasure, that one of his brothers had carried with him to the grave the scars of twenty-four wounds, many of them the results of private brawls. Another brother was gentleman of the King's chamber, and the famous master of the revels ; and he, too, had given several proofs of his courage in-duels.

The infancy of Edward was so sickly that his friends did not think fit to teach him his alphabet till he was seven years old. He would have us believe, however, that he was wise though not early schooled; for when an infant he understood what was said by others, yet he forebore to speak, lest he should utter something that was imperfect or impertinent. When he began to talk, one of the first enquiries he made was how he had come into the world. He told his nurse, keeper, and others, that he found himself here indeed, but from what cause or beginning, or by what means, he could not imagine. The nurse stared, and other people wondered at this precocious wisdom; and when he reflected upon the matter in after life he was happy in the thought, that as he found himself in possession of this life, without knowing any thing of the pangs and throes his mother suffered, when doubtless they no less afflicted him than her, so he hoped that his soul would pass to a better life than this, without being sensible of the anguish his body would feel in death. *

He won the acquaintance of the learned languages, and other branches of juvenile literature, with great ease; and when at the age of twelve

* Life of Edward Lord Herbert, written by himself, p. 16.

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he was sent to Oxford, he tells us that he disputed at his first coming in logic, and made in Greek the exercises required in his college oftener than in Latin. He married at the age of fifteen, and then applied himself more vigorously than ever to study, particularly the continental languages: but to fence and to ride the great horse were his principal ambition, for such were the exercises in which the chivalry of his time were educated,—and he aspired to fame in every pursuit. From the same feeling of vanity that urged him to publish his deistical dogmas, he complacently says of himself that no man understood the use of his weapon better than himself, or had more dexterously availed himself thereof on all occasions.*

In the year 1600, he removed with his wife and mother from Montgomery-castle (the seat of his ancestors) to London, and, prompted by curiosity rather than ambition, he went to court; and as it was the manner of those times for all men to kneel down before the Queen, he was likewise upon his knees in the Presence Chamber, when she passed by to the chapel at Whitehall. As soon as she saw him, she stopped, and, swearing her usual oath, demanded, “Who is this?” Upon being made acquainted with his name and cir-

* Life, p. 46.

cumstances, the Queen looked attentively upon him, and again giving emphasis to her feelings by an oath, she said that it was a pity he was married so young, and thereupon gave him her hand twice to kiss, both times patting him on the cheek. He was made knight of the Bath by James I.; and with his usual vanity declares that his person was amazingly commended by the lords and ladies who attended the ceremony. The most handsome lady of the court pledged her honour for his, and then the strings of silk and gold were taken from his arm. These strings, as I have already mentioned, were worn by all the knights till they had achieved some high deed of arms, or till some lady of honour took them off, and fastened them on her sleeve, saying that she would answer her friend would prove a good knight. Like all other knights of the Bath he swore to do justice to the uttermost of his power, particularly to ladies and gentlewomen wronged in their honour, if they demanded assistance.

Soon after this circumstance, he was wearied both of literary and domestic pursuits, and he resolved to travel in foreign countries. His skill in fencing was now to be brought into play; for he tells us that in France, in his time, there was scarcely any man thought worthy regard who had

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—

not killed another in a duel.* He went to Paris, and was hospitably entertained at the neighbouring castle of Merlon, by Henry de Montmorenci, second son of the great Constable Anne de Montmorenci.

An occasion for exercising his fantastic chivalry soon presented itself. A French cavalier snatched a riband from the bonnet of a young lady, and fastened it to his own hat-band. He refused to return it, and the injured damsel asked the English knight to get it restored to her. He accordingly advanced to the Frenchman, courteously, with his hat in his hand, and desired him to restore the riband. Meeting only with a rude denial, he replied he would make him restore it by force. The Frenchman ran away; but finding himself closely pursued, he turned round to the young lady, and was about to restore her the top-knot, when Sir Edward seized his arm, and said to her, "It was I that gave it."—"Pardon me," quoth she, "it is he

* Life, &c. p. 63. Sir Edward was very much annoyed at Paris by a Monsieur Balagny, who enjoyed more attention of the ladies than he did. They used one after another to invite him to sit near them, and when one lady had his company awhile, another would say, "You have enjoyed him long enough, I must have him now." The reason of all this favour was, that he had killed eight or nine men in single fight, p. 70. This was the degeneracy of chivalry with a vengeance.

that gives it me." Sir Edward observed, "I will not contradict you; but if he presumes to say that I did not constrain him to give it, I will fight with him." No reply was made, and the French gentleman conducted the lady back to the castle. Sir Edward was very anxious for a duel, but none took place; and he was obliged to please his conscience with the reflection, that he had acted agreeably to the oath which he took when inaugurated a knight of the Bath.*

On three other occasions, he sported his chivalry in the cause of the ladies; but the stories of these affairs are poor and uninteresting after his most delectable behaviour in the Montmorenci garden.

For many years Sir Edward lived in the court or the camp, in France or England, seldom visiting his wife in Montgomeryshire, and more frequently busied in private brawls (but his challenges never ripened into duels) than engaged in philosophical meditation.

In the year 1614, while he was in the service of the Prince of Orange, a trumpeter came from the hostile (the Spanish) army to his with a challenge,—that if any cavalier would fight a single combat for the sake of his mistress, a Spanish knight would meet him. The Prince al-

* Life, p. 60.

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lowed Sir Edward to accept the challenge. Accordingly a trumpeter was sent to the Spanish army with the answer, that if the challenger were a knight without reproach, Sir Edward Herbert would answer him with such weapons as they should agree upon. But before this herald could deliver his charge, another Spanish trumpeter reached the camp of the Prince of Orange, declaring that the challenge had been given without the consent of the Marquis of Spinola (the commander), who would not permit it. This appeared strange to the Prince and Sir Edward; and on their thinking that the Spaniards might object to the duel taking place in the camp of the challenged, as it was originally proposed, Sir Edward resolved to go to the enemy, and give him his choice of place. He accordingly went; but Spinola would not suffer the duel to be fought. A noble entertainment greeted the Englishman, the Marquis condescending to present to his guest the best of the meat which his carver offered to himself. He expressed no anger that the challenges had been given; for he politely asked his guest of what disease Sir Francis Vere had died. Sir Edward told him, because he had nothing to do. Spinola replied, in allusion to the idleness of the campaign, "And it is enough to kill a General;" and thus

impliedly excused any impatient sallies of his young soldiers.

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Sir Henry Wotton, the ambassador of the King of England, having mediated a peace between the Prince of Orange and the Spaniards, our knight proceeded on his travels through Germany and Italy. He complimented a nun upon her singing, while all the other Englishmen present were delighted into silence: but he was always ready to speak as well as to fight for the honour of the knighthood of the Bath. "Die whensoever you will," said he to the young lady, "you need change neither voice nor face to be an angel!" These words, he assures us, were fatal, for she died shortly afterwards.

He went to Florence, and was more pleased with a nail, which was at one end iron and the other gold, than by all the glories of painting and sculpture with which the Etrurian Athens was then fresh and redolent. He sojourned for some time at Rome, but hastily left the city when the Pope was about to bless him. This refusal of an old man's benediction proceeded from the vanity of his character. Though perfectly indifferent to Christianity, when he entered Rome he ostentatiously said to the master of the English college, that he came not to the city to study controversies, but to view its antiquities; and if, without scandal

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to the religion in which he had been born and educated, he might take this liberty, he would gladly spend some time there. A decorous submission to the usages of Rome would not have gained him the world's talk; and, therefore, he hastily quitted the Consistory when the blessing was about to be given, knowing that such a bold act of contempt on the religion of the place would be bruited every where.

The remainder of his adventures on the Continent is not worthy of record. He returned to England; and, in 1616, he was sent to France as the English ambassador. Previously to his setting off, he engaged to fight a duel, though the day fixed for the circumstance was Sunday; but when he arrived at Paris on a Saturday night, he refused to accept an invitation of the Spanish ambassador for an interview the next morning, because Sunday was a day, which, as he alleged, he wholly gave to devotion. The spirit of duelling was far more powerful in his mind than the love of conformity to religious decencies; but it cost him nothing; indeed, it only aggrandised his importance to decline the visit of the Spanish ambassador on a Sunday. He remained some time in France, maintaining the honour of his country on all occasions; particularly with reiference to the mighty question,

whether his coachman, or that of the Spanish ambassador, should take precedence.

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Sir Edward was instructed by his court to mediate between Louis XIII. and his Protestant subjects; but, instead of conducting the affair with coolness and political sagacity, he quarrelled with Luines, the minister of the French king. Complaints of his conduct were sent to England, and he was recalled. The death of the offended statesman happened soon afterwards, and Herbert was again dispatched to France.

The next remarkable event in his life was the publication of his book "*De Veritate*," whose object it was to show the all-sufficiency of natural religion. But he, who denied the necessity of a revelation to the human race, of matters concerning their eternal salvation, fancied that Heaven expressly revealed to him its will that his book should be published. Such are the inconsistencies of infidelity!

"A godless regent trembling at a star!"

His amusing auto-biography ends with an account of a noise from heaven, when he prayed for a sign of the Divine will, whether or not he should print his book.

Not many other circumstances of his life are on record. He was raised to the Irish peerage

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in 1625, and, afterwards, was created an English baron, by the title of Lord Herbert of Cherbury, in Shropshire. He published another Latin work, in support of the cause of infidelity, and then gave to the world his History of the Reign of Henry VIII.; a book which has been always characterised, by writers who have never read a line of it, as a master-piece of historic biography; and if gross partiality for his hero, profound ignorance of human nature, imperfect acquaintance with his subject, and a pedantic style, constitute the excellence of memoir-writing, Lord Herbert is an author of the first class.

Though he had been raised to the peerage by the Stuarts, yet in the days of Charles I. we find him on the side of the parliament. Montgomercy-castle was demolished by the King's troops, and the parliament made him a pecuniary compensation. He removed to London, died in 1648, and was buried in St. Giles's.

His character.

His inferiority to the knights of yore.

Such was Lord Herbert of Cherbury. His life may be placed in opposition to, rather than in harmony with, the heroes of early chivalric times. He had their courage, it is true, but he had none of their dignity and nobleness, none of their manly grace; and there was a fantastic trifling in his conduct, which their elevated natures would have scorned. He was no Christian knight:

the superstition of the Chandos's and Mannys, gross as it was, is not so offensive to the moral sense as the craft and subtlety of Lord Cherbury's intellect, which refined Christianity into deism. We can admire the heroes of the days of Edward III., placing their swords' points on the Gospels, and vowing to defend the truth to the utterance; but how absurd was the fanaticism, and contemptible the vanity, of him who expected that Heaven would declare its will that he should deliver to the world the vain chimeras of his imagination!

The history of English chivalry is now fast drawing to a close. We may mark the state of the system of chivalric education in the castles of the nobility. Every great lord, as his ancestors had been, was still attended by several of the inferior nobility and gentry, and such service was not accounted dishonourable. The boys were, as of old, called pages, though perhaps the age for this title somewhat stepped beyond the ancient limit.

Decline of
chivalric
education.

But this was not the only change in that class of the chivalry of England. In former days pages had been the attendants of the great in the amusements of the chace and the baronial hall; and had sometimes shared, with the squire, the more perilous duties of the battle-plain. In the course of time, as the frame of society

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became more settled, the arts of peace smoothed the stern fierceness of chivalry, and the page was the honorary servant of the lord or his lady, in the proud ceremonial of nobility, and never mixed in war. He continued to be a person of gentle birth, and his dress was splendid; circumstances extremely favourable to that singular state of manners which permitted a woman, without any loss of her good name, to follow him she admired in the disguise of a gentle page, and gradually to win his affections by the deep devotion of her love. Poetry may have adorned such instances of passion, for the subject is full of interest and pathos; but the poets in the best days of English verse so frequently copied from the world around them, that we cannot but believe they drew also in this instance from nature. This form of manners was romantic; but it certainly was not chivalric: for in pure days of chivalry the knights, and not the damsels, were the wooers.—But every thing was changed or degraded.

The general state of the page in the last days of chivalry may be collected from one of the dramas of Ben Jonson, where Lovel, a complete gentleman, a soldier, and a scholar, is desirous to take as his page the son of Lord Frampul, who was disguised as the host of the Light Heart Inn at Barnet :

Lov. A fine child !

You will not part with him, mine host ?

Host. Who told you

I would not.

Lov. I but ask you.

Host. And I answer,

To whom ? for what ?

Lov. To me, to be my page.

Host. I know no mischief yet the child hath done,
To deserve such a destiny.

Lov. Why ?

Host. * * * * *

Trust me I had rather

Take a fair halter, wash my hands, and hang him

Myself, make a clean riddance of him, than —

Lov. What ?

Host. Than damn him to that desperate course of
life.

Lov. Call you that desperate, which by a line
Of institution, from our ancestors,

Hath been derived down to us, and received

In a succession, for the noblest way

Of breeding up our youth, in letters, arms,

Fair mien, discourses, civil exercise,

And all the blazon of a gentleman ?

Where can he learn to vault, to ride, to fence,

To move his body gracefuller, to speak

His language purer, or to tune his mind

Or manners, more to the harmony of nature,

Than in these nurseries of nobility ?

Host. Ay that was when the nursery's self was
noble,

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And only virtue made it, not the market,
 That titles were not vented at the drum,
 Or common outcry, goodness gave the greatness,
 And greatness worship: every house became
 An academy of honour, and those parts
 We see departed, in the practice now,
 Quite from the institution.” *

Something must be abated from this censure, for the speaker was a disappointed man, and therefore querulous. But whatever might have been the education of the page, the character itself was lost in the political convulsions in the time of Charles I. So many of the old institutions of England were then destroyed, that we need not be surprised that the one should not escape, which had long survived its purpose and occasion. At the restoration of the monarchy the ancient court-ceremonial was revived, and therefore the page was a royal officer: but he is scarcely ever mentioned in the subsequent private history of the country; and his duties at the court were altogether personal though gentilitial, and had no reference at all to military affairs.

* Act i. scene 1. of the play whose title I shall transcribe: “The New Inn: or, the Light Heart; a Comedy. As it was never acted, but most negligently played by some, the KING’S SERVANTS; and more squeamishly beheld and censured by others, the KING’S SUBJECTS, 1629. Now at last set at liberty to the Readers, His MAJESTY’S Servants and Subjects, to be judg’d of, 1631.”

The military features of chivalry had been rudely marred in the wars between the houses of York and Lancaster, and by the days of James I. not a lineament remained. The graceful sports of chivalry had been sustained by the bold and vigorous Henry VIII., and romance could not but be pleasing to a maiden queen. With Prince Henry the tournament died. Mightier questions than those which knighthood could resolve were before the world; and there was nothing in the bearing of the friends of Charles I., misnamed Cavaliers, to which the character of chivalric can be applied.

The reign of Charles I. is, however, in one respect a memorable epoch in the history of English knighthood. By the ancient constitution, as we saw in the last chapter, the King had the power of compelling his vassals to be knighted. In all ages, however, whether of the high power, or the decline of chivalry, many persons, considering the duties and charges of the honour, had been wont to commute it by a fine; and this custom had often whetted the avarice of monarchs. Elizabeth was the last of our sovereigns who enriched her exchequer by receiving these commutations. Charles I. endeavoured to augment his revenue by similar means; but the spirit of the age was hostile to his claim; and, certainly, as the military system had changed, it was absurd and unjust that the burden should survive the benefit of the

Important
change in
knighthood
by parlia-
ment of
Charles I.

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ancient system. The people triumphed, and Charles conceded a prerogative which was only known as a means of public oppression. By a statute passed in the sixteenth year of his reign (cap. 20.) the right of compelling men to receive knighthood was abolished.

One branch of English chivalry, namely, knighthood as connected with property, knighthood as the external symbol of feudalism, was thus put an end to. But knighthood still continued as an honourable distinction. In this, the most interesting part of the subject, a great change had taken place : but it is impossible to mark the exact time of its occurring. We only know that even in the time of the Lancastrian princes knights could not, of their own free will, add new members to the order of chivalry, and that link of honourable equality, which used to bind all men of gentle birth in one state, was broken. The whole power of creating knights was usurped by the crown. The first step, which apparently led to this usurpation, was made even in the purest age of chivalry, the reign of our Edward III. : for at that time civil merit was rewarded by chivalric distinctions. The judges of the courts of law were dignified with knighthood. *

Application
of chivalric
honours to
men of civil
station.

* Dugdale, *Origines Juridiciales*. c. 39. Serjeants at law were not knighted till the reign of Henry VIII. c. 51.

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In the subsequent reigns of the Lancastrian princes, it seems to have been regarded as a well established custom, that men who deserved highly of the commonwealth should be honoured with some title above the state of a simple gentleman. Chivalry, as the great fountain of honour, was again resorted to, and the title of esquire was drawn forth. It was then applied to sheriffs of counties, serjeants-at-law, and other men of station; and afterwards courtesy added it to the names of the eldest sons of peers, of knights, and many others. The honour, like the rest of the chivalric honours, was personal, not hereditary, and in strictness could be enjoyed only by virtue of creation, or as a dignity appurtenant to an office. The mode of creation was copied from the investiture of a knight. The person who was to be admitted into the squirehood of the country knelt before his sovereign, who, placing a silver collar of scollop shells mixed with esses round his neck, cried, “ Arise, Sir Esquire, and may God make thee a good man.” *

This right of conferring chivalric honours upon persons of civil station was exercised by the sovereigns only, and it furnished the pretence of their assuming the right of judging upon what occasions it should be conferred on men whose

* Ferne's Blazon of Gentry, p. 100. See too Camden's Britannia “on the degrees in England,” p. 234.

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Knights
made in the
field. 3

profession was war. The custom of creating knights in the field of battle by the general in command prevailed in England so late as the reign of Queen Elizabeth. Robert, the second son of Sir Henry Sidney, and brother of the famous Sir Philip, was knighted by Leicester, for his chivalric deportment at the battle of Zutphen. Essex, while commanding in Spain and Ireland, distributed chivalric honours with such profusion, that the Queen, who was always jealous of her power, made his conduct, on this subject, the matter of one of the articles of accusation against him.

Carpet
knights.

Knighthood, when conferred in the field, was ever held as a very honourable distinction. When men, who were undistinguished by valour*, were raised to chivalric rank, they were called Carpet Knights, as we are taught by the old ceremonials; and society always used the expression contemptuously, as we learn from our dramatists, who are as good witnesses for the customs of their times as romancers had been for those of earlier days. "He is knight, dubbed with unhacked rapier, and on carpet consideration," is the character which Sir Toby Belch gives of his friend

* Thus Lord Bacon says, "There be now for martial encouragement some degrees and orders of chivalry, which nevertheless are conferred promiscuously on soldiers and no soldiers," &c. *Essays on the true Greatness of Kingdoms.*

Sir Andrew Aguecheek. In a passage of surpassing beauty Fletcher has described the characters of the chivalric and the carpet knight.

“ Oh the brave dames
Of warlike Genoa ! They had eyes to see
The inward man, and only from his worth,
Courage, and conquests, the blind archer knew
To head his shafts, or light his quenched torch ;
They were proof against him else ! No carpet knight
That spent his youth in groves or pleasant bowers,
Or stretching on a couch his lazy limbs,
Sung to his lute such soft and pleasing notes
As Ovid nor Anacreon ever knew,
Could work on them, nor once bewitch'd their sense;
Though he came so perfum'd, as he had robb'd
Sabea or Arabia of their wealth,
And stor'd it in one suit.” *

The order of knighthood was indeed wretchedly degraded in the days of James I., if we can allow any truth to the remarks of Osborne. “ At this time the honour of knighthood, which antiquity reserved sacred, as the cheapest and readiest jewel to present virtue with, was promiscuously laid on any head belonging to the yeomanry (made addle through pride, and a contempt of their ancestors' pedigree,) that had

* Fletcher, *Fair Maid of the Inn*, act i. scene 1.

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but a court friend, or money to purchase the favour of the meanest, able to bring him into an outward room when the King, the fountain of honour, came down, and was uninterrupted by other business ; in which case, it was then usual for him to grant a commission for the chamberlain, or some other lord to do it."

Knights of
the Bath.

The carpet, or ordinary knights, must not be confounded with knights of the Bath, though both classes were knights of peace. Knights of the Bath had always precedence of knights-bachelors, without any regard to dates of creation. The knights of the Bath were men of rank and station, or distinguished for military qualities. They were created by our sovereign at their coronations, or on other great occasions, from the time of Henry V., when I last adverted to the subject, to so late a period as the reign of Charles II., who before he was crowned created sixty-eight knights of the Bath. When queens were sovereigns a commission was granted to a nobleman to create knights ; and the commission of Queen Elizabeth to the Earl of Arundel is so rich in thought, and dignified in style, that I cannot resist the pleasure of transcribing it. After the usual salutations, " To all men," the Queen declares as follows : " Whereas, we, minding to proceed to the solemnity of our coronation in such and like honourable sort as in the coronation

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of our progenitors hath been accustomed, and as to our estate and dignity appertaineth, have, both for the more adornment of the feast of our said coronation, and for the nobility of of blood, good service, and other good qualities, of many our servants and other subjects, resolved to call certain of them to the order of knighthood. We let you wete, that for the special trust and confidence which we have reposed in our right trusty and right well-beloved cousin and counsellor, Henry Earl of Arundel, Lord Steward of our household, we have appointed, and by these presents do appoint and authorise him for us, and in our name, and by our authority, not only to do and exercise every thing and things to be done and exercised in our behalf, for the full making of those knights of the Bath, whom we have caused to be specially called for that purpose, but also to make and ordain such and so many other persons knights, within the time of two days next ensuing the date hereof, as by us shall be named, or by himself shall be thought meet, so that he exceed not in the whole the number of thirty," &c.*

The ceremonies of creating those knights furnishes us with such an accurate picture of the manners of our ancestors, that, though I have

Full account of the ancient ceremonies of creating them.

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touched upon the subject before, I shall, without apology, describe its minutest features. When an esquire came to court to receive the order of knighthood, in time of peace, after the custom of England, he was worshipfully received by the officers of the court, the steward, or chamberlain, if they were at the palace, or else by the marshals and ushers. Two esquires, sage, and well nourished in courtesy, and expert in deeds of knighthood, were assigned as his teachers and governors. If he arrived in the morning, he was to serve the King with water at dinner, or else to place a dish of the first course upon the table; and this was his farewell to his personal duties of esquire. His governors then led him to his chamber, where he remained alone till the evening, when they sent a barber to him, who prepared his bath. Water was not yet put into it, but the esquire was, who sat, wrapped in white cloths and mantles, while his beard was shaved, and his head rounded. All this being done, the governors went to the King, and said to him, "Most mighty Prince, our Sovereign Lord, it waxeth nigh unto the even, and our master is ready in the bath." The King then commanded his chamberlain to take into the chamber of him who was to be made knight the prouest and wisest knights about the court, in order that they might

instruct and counsel the esquire, touching the order of knighthood.

The chamberlain, preceded by minstrels singing and dancing, and accompanied by the chosen cavaliers, went to the door of the esquire's room. When the governors heard the sound of minstrelsy, they stripped their master, and left him naked in the bath. The music ceased, and the chamberlain and his knights entered the room. After paying much worship and courtesy to each other, he to whom precedence was allowed advanced to the bath, and, kneeling down, whispered these words in the ear of the esquire: "Right dear brother, may this order bring great honour and worship unto you; and I pray that Almighty God may give you the praise of all knighthood. Lo! this is the order: Be ye strong in the faith of Holy Church, relieve widows and oppressed maidens, give every one his own, and, above all things, love and dread God. Superior to all other earthly objects, love the King, thy sovereign lord; him and his right defend unto thy power, and put him in worship."

When the esquire was thus advised, the knight-counsellor took in his hand water from the bath, and threw it gently on the shoulder of his young friend. The other knights counselled and bathed him in a similar manner, and then,

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with the first knight, left the chamber. The governors took the esquire out of the bath, and laid him on a bed “to dry.” When the process of drying was finished, he was taken out of bed, and clothed warmly; and there was thrown over him a cope of black russet, with long sleeves, and the hood, like that of a hermit, sewn on the cope. The barber had the bath for his fee, and the operation of shaving was paid for separately, agreeably to the estate of the esquire; and if there was any dispute about the sum, the King’s Majesty’s judgment was looked to.

A joyous company of knights, with squires dancing, and minstrels singing, entered the room, and with light pace and gay deportment led their friend into the chapel. There they were refreshed with wines, spices, and sweatmeats; and the knights-counsellors, being thanked by the esquire for their great labour and worship, departed. The governors, the officers of arms, and the waits, remained in the chapel with the esquire. It was his duty to pass the night in prayer to Almighty God that he might worthily receive the honour, and discharge all the offices of knight-hood. A taper of wax was always burning before him.

When the morning dawned a priest entered the chapel, and the more solemn duties of religion were proceeded with. Shriving, matins,

the mass, and the communion, were performed, the esquire, during the principal ceremonies of the sacrament, holding the taper in his hand, with a penny stuck in the wax, near the light; and, finally, he offered them to the priest, the taper to the honour of God, and the penny to the honour of him that should make him a knight. His governors then took him from the chapel, and laid him in his bed, divesting him of his hermit's weeds.

After some time for refreshment had been allowed him, the governors went to the King, and said, "Most victorious Prince, our master shall awake when it so pleaseth Your Majesty." The King accordingly commanded the party of knights, esquires, and minstrels, to go into the chamber of the esquire, and awake him. They went, and said to him, "Sir, good day: it is time to arise." The governors raised him in his bed: the most worthy and the most sage knight presented him his shirt, the next cavalier in consideration gave him his breeches, the third his doublet, the fourth his robe of red taffata, lined with white sarcenet; and, when he was thus partially clothed, two others lifted him out of bed. Two donned his hose, which were of black silk, or of black cloth, with soles of leather, two others buttoned his sleeves, another bound

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round him a girdle of plain white leather, an inch broad. The combing of the head, and putting on the coif, were each performed by a knight. Another gentle cavalier also gave him his mantle of red tartayn, crossed with white on the breast, and fastened with a lace of white silk, from which depended a pair of white gloves. How his white-feathered white hat got upon his head I know not; for the grave ceremonial is altogether silent about the matter.

The dressing being concluded, the esquire was placed on horseback, and led by the knights into the hall of the King, preceded by a young gentle esquire, also on horseback, and carrying by its point a sword, in a white scabbard, with gilt spurs hanging upon the cross hilt. The marshal of England assisted the candidate for knighthood to alight, and led him into the hall, where he sat at the head of the second table, surrounded by his counselling knights, his sword-bearer, and governors. The King, on entering the hall, demanded the sword and the spurs, and they were given to him by the chamberlain. The King gave the right spur to one of the noblest peers about him, commanding that lord to place it on the right heel of the esquire. The lord knelt on one knee, and, taking the esquire by the right leg, put the foot

upon his knee, and not only affixed the spur to the heel, but made a cross upon the knee of the esquire, and kissed it. Another lord attached the left spur to the left foot with similar ceremonies. The King then, out of the meekness of his high might, girt the sword round the esquire. The esquire raised his arms, and the King, throwing his arms round the neck of the esquire, smote the esquire on the shoulder with his right hand, kissing him at the same time, and saying, "Be ye a good knight."

The new-made knight was then conducted by his counselling knights into the chapel, upon whose high altar he laid his sword, offering it to God and Holy Church, most devoutly beseeching Heaven, that he might always worthily demean himself in the order. He then took a sup of wine and left the chapel, at whose door his spurs were taken off by the master-cook, who received them for his fee; and in the fine style of old English bluntness reminded him, that "if he ever acted unworthily of his knighthood, it would be his duty, with the knife with which he dressed the meats, to strike away his spurs, and that thus by the customs of chivalry he would lose his worship." The new-made knight went into the hall, and sat at table with his compeers; but it did not deport with his modesty to eat in their

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presence, and his abashment kept him from turning his eyes hither and thither. He left the table after the King arose, and went to his chamber with a great multitude of knights, squires, and minstrels, rejoicing, singing, and dancing.

Alone in his chamber, and the door closed, the knight, wearied by this time with ceremony and fasting, ate and drank merrily. He then doffed much of his array, which was distributed among the officers of the household, and put on a robe of blue with the white lace of silk hanging on the shoulder, similar to that which was worn in the days of Henry V.; for however degenerated the world might have become, they could not for shame's sake despise all the forms of chivalry. The ceremony of inauguration concluded by expressions of thanks and courtesy. The knight went to the King, and kneeling before him, said, "Most dread and most mighty Prince, I gratefully salute you for the worship which you have so courteously given to me." The governors thus addressed the knight: "Worshipful Sir, by the King's command we have served you, and that command fulfilled to our power; and what we have done in our service against your reverence we pray you of your grace to pardon us. Furthermore, by the custom

of the King's court, we require of you robes and fees becoming the rank of King's squires, who are fellows to the knights of other lands."*

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* British Museum, Cottonian MSS. Nero. c. ix. folio 168. The assumption of dignity by the squire-governors, in order to get greater largesses, is amusing enough : but no knights of other lands were present to chastise them for their insolence.

CHAP. IV.

PROGRESS OF CHIVALRY IN FRANCE.

Chivalry in Baronial Castles..... Chivalry injured by Religious Wars..... Beneficial Influence of Poetry and Romance..... Chivalric Brilliancy of the Fourteenth Century..... Brittany..... Du Guesclin..... Romantic Character of his early Years..... His knightly conduct at Rennes..... Gallantry at Cochetel..... Political Consequences of his Chivalry..... He leads an Army into Spain..... And Changes the Fortunes of that Kingdom..... Battle of Navaret..... Du Guesclin Prisoner..... Treatment of him by the Black Prince..... Ransomed..... Is made Constable of France..... Recovers the Power of the French Monarchy..... Companionship in Arms between Du Guesclin and Olivier De Clisson..... Du Guesclin's Death before Randon..... His Character..... Decline of Chivalry..... Proof of it..... Little Chivalry in the Second Series of French and English Wars..... Combats of Pages..... Further Decay of Chivalry..... Abuses in conferring Knighthood..... Burgundy..... Its Chivalry..... The Romantic Nature of the Burgundian Tournaments..... Last Gleams of Chivalry in France..... Life of Bayard..... Francis I. Extinction of Chivalry.

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THE high rank of France among the civilised states of Europe in the middle ages decides the

country to which our attention should be next directed in tracing the history of chivalry. Every French baron graced his nobility by the honour of knighthood, and was surrounded by a band of cavaliers. Kings, and even queens, had a certain number of knights who composed their court and accepted their pay; and the conferring of royal honours upon other men than possessors of mere wealth or rank had a powerful effect in promoting the virtues, whatever they might be, of the times. Merit was not considered, as a landed estate, to be altogether hereditary, and the personal nature of chivalry became a check upon the exclusiveness of aristocratical pride.*

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Chivalry in
baronial
castles.

The moral influence of the chivalric code in supporting justice and diffusing gentleness of manners is not very perceptible in the early ages of France; for the chroniclers of those times chiefly mark the general political circumstances of the decline of the house of Charlemagne, the establishing of a feudal aristocracy, and the rise of a new monarchy by the spirit and ambition of Hugh Capet.

In the eleventh century chivalry became a distinguishing feature in the national character

Chivalry
injured by
religious
wars.

* Du Cange, Gloss. ad Script. Med. Œvi. in verb. Milites Regis.

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of France, for the crusades began at that time ; and France, above all other countries of the west, was influenced by their spirit. As every knight vowed to support the church, he readily enough became a soldier in those wars which the clergy declared were essential to the well-being of religion. The Holy Land presented a noble field for the display of his virtue : his love of adventures might be gratified by his long and toilsome journey thither ; and if the shores of Palestine drank his blood, he gained a crown of martyrdom instead of a victor's laurel.

The sword of the cavalier was too often drawn by the church ; and in the persecution of the Albigenses the knighthood of France forgot all the generous liberality and mercy of their order.

Beneficial
influence of
poetry and
romance.

But although the crusades against ferocious Turks and erring Christians took from chivalry much of its gracefulness and beauty, yet a restoring power was found in that love for poetry and romance which for some ages had been spreading itself over the world. Human nature, in Europe, appears to have been sunk to the lowest possible degree of depression at the time when the Roman empire was in its last days of decay. We corrupt our admiration of classical ages into a superstitious idolatry, when we affirm that the revival of the energies of the human intellect took place in consequence of the dis-

covery of a few Greek and Latin manuscripts. The storm from the north in earlier times was the greatest moral blessing which mankind had ever known. It swept away those institutions which were no longer sustained by virtue and genius ; and the settlement of the Gothic kingdoms was the commencement of the new glories of the world. The successors of the Romans were not entirely occupied in the fierce struggles of ambition. A new intellect was impressed upon Europe, wild as nature before it is tamed into artificial society, but rich, vigorous, and beautiful. As the new states of the West took a firm and enduring shape, as the tendency of human nature to improvement gradually became visible, intellectual talent was more and more esteemed. If in the twelfth century the plains of Europe were covered with armed knights, the castles were filled with poets who sang the joys both of war and love ; and although the brave gestes of Charlemagne and his paladins against the Saracens were the theme of many a minstrel's lay, and tended to promote religious wars, yet the same romantic rhymers described the other duties of the chivalric character, and set knightly gentleness and gallantry at the highest pitch of chivalric virtue. That from their own viciousness, or in base compliance with their lords' passions, they were often gross in their descrip-

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tions and depraved in their morality, are circumstances sufficiently true; but still the general tendency of the poetry and romance of the chivalric ages was to improve the manners of the time. To right the oppressed, to succour woman in distress, formed the burden of many an ancient song; and when chaunted to the minstrel's harp in a baronial hall, it won the mind of the feudal noble from those deeds of blood which the superstitious declared were the only duties of a knight.

Chivalric
brilliancy of
the four-
teenth cen-
tury.

The amusements of chivalry aided romance in sleeking o'er the rugged looks of war; for tournaments became more and more the national amusement as the world escaped from the darkness of barbarism. The crusades closed with the thirteenth century; and in the succeeding age that fine spirit of chivalry, which the expeditions to Palestine had checked, shone with unclouded brilliancy. When the plains of France were one vast tilting ground for the French and English knights, stern fanaticism did not draw the sword. In the crusades, romantic aspirations after woman's smiles seldom inspired the hero's chivalry, but in the wars of Edward III. in France, every cavalier fought for the honour of his lady-mistress as well as for the ambition of his King. In those days that great principle of chivalry, the companionship of knights,

was fully felt as an influential motive to action. Therefore the cavalier was courteous to his foe : he waited the leisure, and saluted the other, before he placed his spear in its rest : he did not demand of his captive a ransom more heavy than his estate could well furnish ; and in no case did he inflict cruelties beyond the necessary pains of war. The display of chivalry was as brilliant as its spirit was noble ; and it was a great beauty to behold banners and standards waving in the wind, horses barded, and knights and squires richly armed. But as I collected in a former chapter the most striking circumstances regarding the chivalry of those times, I shall pass on to the next interesting page in knightly story.

It contains the life of a hero, whose chivalric Brittany. courage materially influenced the fortunes of the French monarchy. He sprung, too, from a country that was full of romantic associations. When the Saxons had achieved the conquest of England, many of the subjugated people crossed the sea to France, and settled in Brittany : so numerous, indeed, was the colony, that the historians of that province people it entirely from England. * The ancient language of this island

* Du Chesne. Hist. Franc. Script. vol. ii. p. 148. The assertion, however, is not strictly correct ; for so early as the fourth century Armorica had been colonised from Wales. Argentré, Hist. de la Bretagne, p. 2. A connection ever

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was certainly spoken in Armorica; and all our history and romance were known and cherished there as well and as fondly as in Wales and Cornwall, the other receptacles of oppressed Britons. In after ages both the French and English chevaliers turned their eyes to Brittany with respect and veneration, as the preserver of the fame of Arthur, and of the knights of the Round Table, whose history was a chief source of romantic fiction.

Du Gues-
clin.

And now, in the fourteenth century, a cavalier appeared who was worthy to have broken a lance with

“ Uthers’ son,
‘ Begirt with British and Armorick knights !”

Bertrand du Guesclin, a Breton, of gentle rather than noble family, was a knight in whom the love of military glory burnt with a pure and bright flame. He was born at the chateau of De la Motte de Broen, near Rennes, in Brittany, in the year 1320. Nature had so little graced his personal exterior, that even to the partial eye of a mother he seemed rather a clown than a gen-

Romantic
character of
his early
years.

since subsisted between Armorica and this island; and when the Britons were oppressed, they repaired to the Continent for refuge.

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tleman. Some tinge of melancholy in his nature was mistaken for ill-tempered gloom, and his disposition to taciturnity was fostered by neglect and contempt. He grew rude, violent, and morose; and his parents would not entertain the notion of educating him for knighthood, the wonted distinction of the eldest son of a gentleman. But the disposition of Bertrand's mind was invincible; and he encouraged it by practising with energy and perseverance all the boyish exercises which were the faithful mirrors of war; he practised them, too, in opposition to the will of his father, who never failed to chastise him when he witnessed any display of his nature's bent. He appeared as an unknown knight at a tournament at Rennes, and won the palm of victory from a regularly educated cavalier. The path of military glory now lay before him. Soon afterwards he entered the service of Charles of Blois, who knighted him; and he speedily distinguished himself by several chivalric circumstances.

The town of Rennes was blockaded by the Duke of Lancaster with such ability, that a surrender at discretion was looked for by the English. In full confidence of success, Lancaster vowed that he would not quit the place until he was its master. In this embarrassing conjuncture, one of the citizens offered to pass through

His knight-
ly conduct
at Rennes.

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the camp of the enemy, to deceive the Duke by false intelligence, and, finally, to apprise Charles of Blois of the danger which hung over the place. With great skill and firmness he performed his promise. He repaired to the camp of the Duke, and painted with affected *naïveté* the distress of the besieged, who founded, he said, their only hope of safety on the succour of a French troop that was expected in two days. The tale was credited; and while the duke, hastily collecting his choicest knights, rode at speed to meet the rescue, the townsman of Rennes, from his simple unwarlike appearance, was allowed at his free will to pass through the camp. At some distance from the English station he encountered Bertrand du Guesclin, and described the position of affairs. In a moment, the valiant Breton knight formed and executed his resolve: he waved his pennon, and many hardy soldiers pressed around him. They dashed into the English camp; and, after displaying the power of their chivalry, they seized large stores of provisions, and proudly marched with them into the famished town of Rennes.

Soon afterwards, the wearied and mortified English returned to their camp. Surprised at the destruction which had been committed in his absence, the Duke enquired the cause; and was told that the name of the knight who had exe-

cuted so bold a measure was Du Guesclin. Lancaster, like a gallant cavalier, could admire boldness even in a foeman, and he sent a herald into the town requesting that he might behold the man who had so singularly distinguished himself.

Accordingly, on the next morning, Du Guesclin went to the enemy's camp, his personal safety being secure under the word of English chivalry. He was conducted into the tent of the Duke, who received him with perfect courtesy, which the knight answered, by assuring him, that he was at his command in all things that did not militate against the service of his own chief.

The Duke then demanded the name of his lord, and Du Guesclin replied, Charles of Blois, to whom by right appertained the duchy of Brittany.

An English knight observed, "*Messire Bertrand, avant que ce vous dites se termine arrive, il en coutera cent mille têtes.*"

"*Eh bien,*" answered Du Guesclin, "*qu'on en tue tant qu'on voudra, ceux qui demeureront auront la robe des autres.*"

This repartee amused the Duke, who, pleased at the martial frankness of Du Guesclin, wished to engage him in his service. But he declined all his offers; and after jousting with a knight

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who thought little of his valiancy, he returned to Rennes.

The winter approached; a season more terrible to those without than to those within the walls. Du Guesclin repulsed every assault; and Lancaster would have retired, if his honour had not been pledged to take the town. Du Guesclin's ingenuity assisted him in this exigency. It was agreed that Lancaster should enter Rennes armed, his standards should be planted on the walls, and after this satisfaction of his conscience he should raise the siege. The treaty was faithfully executed. The Duke entered Rennes, remained there some hours, and then quitted it; hardly, however, had he left the gate when the citizens contemptuously cast his standards into the ditch. This indignity wounded him deeply; but being an honourable observer of his word, he would not betray his resentment, or permit his army to avenge this insult to their leader and their nation.*

Gallantry at
Cochetel.

Du Guesclin soon afterwards entered the service of John, King of France, with a considerable band of Breton knights and squires, whom the fame of his chivalry had drawn to his standard. He remained a royal knight till the death of the King in 1364, and then became a soldier of his

* Velly, Hist. de la France, vol. v. p. 132—136.

successor, Charles V. Before the coronation of that monarch, Du Guesclin proved himself worthy of being his cavalier, by a circumstance which entitled him also to national gratitude. The authority of the French, in Normandy, was disputed by some lords of that duchy, who were aided by the English and the Navarrese. The troops of Navarre encountered the French near Cochetel; but instead of maintaining their position on a hill, they descended into the plain, deceived by a feigned retreat of Du Guesclin. Then it was that the Breton ranged his men-at-arms; and their inequality in number to the foe was more than supplied by the reflection with which Du Guesclin animated them, that it behoved the chivalry of France to ornament with laurel the crown of their new sovereign.

Only one circumstance of the battle merits description; and, indeed, it is the only intelligible one in the *mêlée* of the knights. Thirty Gascon gentlemen had united themselves in strict fraternity of enterprise and peril to take prisoner John de Grailly, the commander of the Navarrese. Accordingly, when the fight began they advanced with serried shields into the thickest of the press. They were beaten back; but they soon renewed the charge, and their prowess at length prevailed: for the Navarrese knights had not formed themselves into a band

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for the defence of their commander, and his person was therefore imperfectly protected. His capture decided the fate of the day. The battle of Cochetel is remarkable, not only as gracing a new King but as animating the courage of the French, which had been dispirited by repeated defeats during the two preceding reigns.*

In the same year Du Guesclin, by permission of his sovereign, aided his former friend, Charles de Blois, in establishing his rights over Brittany. The opponent of Charles was John de Mountfort, and a destructive war had been seemingly closed by the peace of Landes. But the Countess of Penthievre, the wife of Charles, disdained any compromise of her rights, and her tears and reproaches induced him to cancel the treaty. The war was renewed; the English siding with De Mountfort, and the French with Charles. The battle of Auray decided the cause. Charles of Blois was slain; and in his last moments he lamented that his ambition had been fatal to so many brave men. Du Guesclin was made prisoner by a squire of Sir John Chandos, the commander of De Mountfort's troops†: but he scarcely felt the pain of imprisonment, so courteously did the English knight deport himself.

* Velly, *Hist. de la France*, vol. v. p. 313, &c.

† D'Argentré, *Histoire de Bretagne*, livre vii. c. 15. Paris, 1618.

Such was the state of Du Guesclin when Europe once again became a scene of chivalry ; and its fortunes were as much influenced by his gallant spirit, as, a few years before, they had been swayed by those knights who had assailed and defended the French crown. The peace of Bretigny had terminated the contest between France and England, and the interesting point of political consideration was Spain. A long course of oppression and tyranny had alienated from Peter, King of Castile, the affections of his people, and stigmatised his name with the epithet, Cruel. His murdering his nobility and his brothers would have passed unnoticed out of Spain ; but he imbrued his hands in the blood of his wife, Blanche of Bourbon, and she was sister of the French Queen. The indignation of Charles V. of France was roused at this last crime ; and the chivalric gallantry of his court loudly echoed his feelings. An army and a leader both were wanting ; for most of the knighthood of France had been slain in the late wars. At that moment Du Guesclin was regarded by the court of France as the great stay of knighthood ; and his love of military adventures, and his aspirations for high enterprises, seconded the wish of the King, that he would revenge the death of his sister. These military qualities of chivalry formed the character of

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Du Guesclin; for he who had been rudely stamped by nature, who little regarded lovers' lays and ladies' bowers, could scarcely sympathise with the gallantry of the court of France. But for the heroism of Du Guesclin the enterprise would have perished in its bud. France was covered with soldiers, the disbanded mercenaries of the late wars. Charles V. regarded them with suspicious eyes; his power was not adequate to annihilate them, or even to punish them for their violation of his subjects' peace; and, skilful prince as he was, he made no attempt to remove them peaceably from his states. It was only to a real genius in war that they would submit; and Du Guesclin, above all other men of his age, was capable of guiding their martial energies. The King ransomed him from Chandos for one hundred thousand franks*, and invested him with the command of the enterprise. Du Guesclin met the mercenaries at the table of carousal, and the occasion of festivity was a favourable one for communicating his scheme. I cannot believe, with some writers, that the unchivalric conduct of Peter stimulated the heroism of these adventures. Among them, indeed, were many soldiers of fortune, generous and noble minded; and such men would sym-

* Froissart, c. 230.

pathise with virtue : but most of them were mere military ruffians, who defied, and were the disgrace of, the law. The promise of two hundred thousand livres from the King of France was the lure for their enterprising themselves, and I need not dwell upon their hope of common military plunder. It is amusing to observe how fondly superstition clings about the heart of man ; for these daring marauders declared that they could not cross the Alps till they had received absolution from the Pope for their former sins. Du Guesclin promised to procure it ; and then the joyousness of the soldier resumed its ascendancy, and they cried, that they had more confidence in him than in all the bishops of France or at Avignon.

Towards that city of Italian prelates they repaired, after having been admitted into the presence of the French King. They astonished the legate of the terrified Pope by declaring that they wanted absolution, and two hundred thousand livres. With these opposite demands His Holiness prudently complied ; and Du Guesclin crossed the Pyrenees, his soldiers being now called the White Companions, from their wearing on their shoulders a white cross, to testify that they had taken up arms only to abolish Judaism, and put down Peter, who was the sup-

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He leads an
army into
Spain,

and changes
the fortunes
of that king-
dom.

posed supporter of it.* Du Guesclin was accompanied into Spain by many noble Spaniards, whom the cruelties of Peter had, some while before, banished from their own country. Among them was Henry of Trastamarra, the son of Leonora de Guzman, the mistress of Peter's father. The hopes of Castile were now directed to Henry; for any defect in the legitimacy of his title was amply supplied by his talents and virtues. Du Guesclin supported the general feeling of the time: he drove the King from the throne, and seated Henry upon it.

The deposed monarch fled to Corunna, embarked, with his three daughters; on board the first ship which the shadow of his former power enabled him to command, and sailed to Bayonne. He knew that the Black Prince was in Bourdeaux, and he hastened to lay before him his wrongs. Edward, hearing of his purpose, and resolving to do him honour, issued out of the city, accompanied by divers knights and squires, and went and met the King, and did him great reverence, both in word and deed. After the Prince had well feasted him, they rode together

* Mémoires de Du Guesclin, vol. iv. c. 16. The mode by which the Queen came by her death was never certainly known. One common story was, that she had been murdered by a party of Jews employed by the King, and hence he was considered a patron of Judaism itself.

to Bourdeaux, Edward, like a courteous knight, giving his friend the right, or side of honour. When they reached the city, the King was conducted to a fair chamber, ready apparelled for him; and, after changing his soiled dress for a robe of splendour, he went to the Princess and the ladies, who received him right courteously.*

* This is Froissart's story, c. 231., and far more natural than the account in the *Mémoires de Du Guesclin* (which Mr. Turner has placed in the text of his *History of England*). The memoir-writer gives a long melo-dramatic story of Peter's application to the Prince — of his tears and sobs, and other expressions of grief. The tale goes on to relate, that when the Prince was won to espouse his cause, his Princess, who was at her toilette, was much displeased, that he should have been imposed upon by a man so criminal as the Spanish King. Edward, fancying his martial prerogative infringed, exclaimed, "I see that she wants me to be always at her side. But a Prince who wishes to immortalize his name must *seek* occasions to signalise himself in war, and must by his victories obtain reward among posterity. By St. George, I *will* restore Spain to its right inheritor." Mr. Turner says, "That although this account is given by an enemy, yet as the circumstances correspond with the known character of Edward, they seem entitled to our belief." *History of England*, vol. ii. p. 178. Now, for my part, I do not believe one word of the pretty stories of the tears and the toilette. The *Mémoires* of Du Guesclin are a good authority for the life of their hero; but Froissart is the historian of the other side of the question, and the hero of his tale (if sometimes he loses historic dignity in the partiality of biography) is Edward. Froissart was acquainted with every circumstance that happened in the English army, and his account of the matter is far more rational than that

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But few entreaties were necessary, before Edward promised the best exertions of his chivalry to restore him to his throne. The rights of legitimacy were his pretext; for he said that “it was not fit a bastard should hold a realm in heritage, and put his brother, the rightful inheritor of the land, out of his own realm; the which things all kings and kings’ sons should in nowise suffer, nor consent to, for it was a great prejudice against the state royal.” The Prince, as Froissart says, was then in the lusty flower of his youth; and he was never weary nor well satisfied with war, since the first beginning that he bore arms, but ever intended to achieve high deeds of chivalry.* “The people of Spain,” observes Froissart in another place, “had great marvel of the Prince’s intention, and there was much communing thereof. Some said the Prince took on him the enterprise for pride and presumption, and was, in a manner, angry of the

of Du Guesclin’s historian. It is expressive of the character of Edward and his times. Here we see the gentle knight yielding the place of honour to his friend, and the lady of the knight treating the guests sweetly and graciously. The toilette-scene is altogether omitted; and even if it had been inserted in the Chronicle I should reject it as false, for it was not characteristic of Edward’s noble mindedness to speak to his Princess with petulance and ill humour.

* Froissart, liv. i. c. 231, 232.

honour that Sir Bertrand of Du Guesclin had gotten, in conquering of the realm of Castile, in the name of King Henry, who was by him made king.” * And if the principles of human nature and chivalry should still leave any doubt on our minds regarding Edward’s motives, his treatment of Du Guesclin, when the noble Breton became his prisoner, would remove any obscurity.

His council in vain endeavoured to dissuade him from his purpose, though these good and sage imaginative lords pleaded well the cause of justice. “Sir,” they said, “ye have heard it observed, divers times, he that embraceth too much holdeth the weaklier. It is for a truth that ye are one of the Princes of the world most praised, honoured, and redoubted, and hold on this side of the sea great lands and seigniories, thanked be God, in good rest and peace. There is no king, near nor far, who at this time dares to displease you; so renowned are you of good chivalry, grace, and good fortune. You ought, therefore, by reason, to be content with what you have, and seek not to get any enemies. Sir, we say not this for evil. We know well that the King, Don Peter of Castile, who is now driven out of his realm, is a man of high

* Froissart, c. 232.

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mind, right cruel, and full of evil conditions ; for by him have been done many evil deeds in the realm of Castile ; and he hath caused many a valiant man to lose his head, and brought cruelly to an end, without any manner of reason ; and so by his villain deeds he is now put out of his realm : and also, besides all this, he is enemy to the church, and cursed by our holy father, the Pope. He is reputed, and hath been a great season, a tyrant ; and, without tittle of reason, hath always grieved and made war with his neighbours, the King of Arragon and the King of Navarre, and would have disinherited them by puissance ; and also, as the bruit runneth throughout his realm, how he causeth to die his wife, your cousin, daughter to the Duke of Bourbon. Wherefore, Sir, you ought to think and consider that all this that he now suffers are rods and strokes of God sent to chastise him, and to give example to all other Christian kings and princes, to beware that they do not as he hath done.”

Such were the counsels of the Gascon and English knights who attended Edward ; but his resolution was formed, and he prepared for war. He drew from the White Companies those of his valiant liegemen, who, for want of other chevance, had joined Du Guesclin ; and, in England, when his purpose was bruited, all the

youthful chivalry was on fire to join the hero of Cressy and Poitiers. CHAP.
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He commenced his march with thirty thousand soldiers. It was winter when they passed through the valley of Roncesvalles ; and, while the snow drove in their faces, they cheered their spirits by singing the songs in which the minstrel-muse had celebrated the deeds of Charlemagne's paladins. At Pampeluna their distressful march was relieved by the King of Navarre, whose aid they had purchased ; and the Prince of Wales proceeded to Castile. The battle of Navaret decided the contest. The common people of Spain, who composed the first ranks of Henry, fought so bravely with their slings, that the Englishmen were sorely troubled ; but Edward's archers drew their bows right yeomanly, and soon checked their fury. Henry had on his side more than a hundred thousand men in harness, from Castile, Portugal, and other states ; and well and chivalrously did they sustain his cause. The better-appointed force of Edward gradually prevailed, though King Henry's troops fought to the bravest point ; for, as they had placed him on the throne, they felt their honour engaged to fight for him to the utterance. The battle, in all its press and din, was fought between the troops of Du Guesclin and those of Sir John Chandos. The noble Breton

Battle of
Navaret,
April 3.
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was taken prisoner, and the English remained masters of the field. Don Pedro was restored to his throne, and Edward somewhat redeemed his previous conduct, by inducing the King to grant a general pardon and amnesty. The ingratitude of Pedro was the consequence of the Black Prince's exertions in his favour; and I need not dwell upon such a natural circumstance.*

To furnish his troops with those arrears of pay which Peter should have satisfied, Edward was obliged to tax the possessions of the English in France. Between the people of England and the French there had been long-enduring jealousies: there was no community of ideas and manners between them; and the principle of obedience more naturally rested on a French than on an English sovereign. The demeanour of the Black Prince was not that of a courteous and gentle knight: his haughtiness lost him many friends; and his impolicy of giving all the offices of state in Gascony and Aquitaine to Englishmen was bitterly complained of, and

* The Memoirs of Du Guesclin and Froissart, and a few passages in Mariana, have furnished this account of the Spanish war. In the general outline I have been anticipated by the popular historians of England; but I have introduced a great many circumstances essential to my subject, and which did not come within the scope of their design,

resented by the lords of those countries, who had perilled themselves, to the loss of their estates, in his cause.

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On the other hand, the English were not backward in reproaching the Gascons. Certain knights of England once told the Black Prince, that he little knew the mind of these people, nor how proud they were. "They do not love us, and never did," continued these counsellors. "Sir, remember ye not how highly and greatly they bore themselves against you in the city of Bourdeaux, when King John of France was first carried thither? They said then, and maintained plainly, that by them only ye attained to achieve the taking of the King; and that right well appeared, for you were in great treaty with them for the space of four months, ere they would consent that the French king should be carried into England. First, it behoved you to satisfy their minds, to keep them in love." * Edward's attempt at taxation exasperated the angry feelings of his subjects, and was the great and immediate cause of their revolt to the French King.

Edward detained Du Guesclin in prison longer than was consistent with the feelings of generosity, which were wont to warm the breast of a gentle knight. Yet Edward could state the

Treatment
of him by
the Black
Prince,

* Froissart, book i. c. 233.

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reciprocal duties of conqueror and captive with accuracy; that the former ought not to exact too high a sum, and that the latter should not attempt to escape without paying his ransom. A cavalier, using the freedom of a festive hour, commented on this observation, by saying, that the world was blaming him for his severity towards one of his prisoners. Edward's sense of honour was touched by this remark, and he summoned Du Guesclin to his presence. The hero appeared before him, dressed in his coarse prison garment; and in reply to some unknightly merriment of the Prince on the rudeness of his appearance, he said, that it remained with the pleasure of the conqueror when he should be better clothed; that for some time he had had only rats and mice for his companions, and, as he added with affecting simplicity, "even to the songs of the birds I have been a stranger."

Edward offered him freedom on condition of his swearing not to war in favour of France or of Henry of Trastamarra, the candidate for the Spanish throne. Du Guesclin could not consistently with honour comply with these conditions; and Edward, stung by the recollection that the world had impeached his bravery and generousness, declared that, to show he dreaded no man, Du Guesclin should be restored to his liberty on paying a proper ransom. The noble

Breton then required to be released on his parole, in order that he might fetch the necessary sum. Edward, touched by his spirited demeanour, resumed all his generous and chivalric feelings, and declared that Du Guesclin should name his own ransom; and instead of fixing it at ten thousand or twenty thousand livres, the captive hero proudly mentioned sixty thousand florins. The Prince was astonished at his apparent presumption, and asked him by what means he could pay so large a sum. “The Kings of France and Castile,” he replied, “are my friends, and will never fail me in a case of necessity. I know a hundred knights of Brittany who would sell their possessions for my liberation; and there is not a woman sitting at her distaff in France who would not labour with her own hands to redeem me from yours.” Du Guesclin was then Ransomed. liberated on his parole of honour, and people gazed with curiosity and respect upon a man who had so noble a sense of his own dignity. *

This liberation took place in the year 1368, and the Breton immediately entered into the service of Henry of Trastamarra. Peter had renewed his cruelties when the Black Prince seated him on the throne, and his tyranny again provoked the Castilians to rebellion. The power

* Memoires de Du Guesclin, p. 255, &c.

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Is made
constable of
France.

of Henry slowly rose, and as soon as Du Guesclin and his Gascons took the field, he once more became king. Soon afterwards our knight was recalled by Charles V. to France, and placed at the head of his chivalry by the title of Constable. He entered Paris amidst general acclamations, the people saluting him with cries which hitherto had been appropriated to kings. He went to court, where the King, in the presence of his nobles, declared, that he chose him to command his armies, and therefore gave him the sword of Constable. Du Guesclin then, with the modesty of a true knight, implored his sovereign to honour with this dignity some one who was more worthy of it than himself. But Charles declared that there was not a knight in France who did not acknowledge the superior worship of Du Guesclin, and therefore he commanded him to accept the office. Du Guesclin yielded; but fearing the courtiers of Paris more than his country's enemies, he entreated the King not to credit any tales which might be circulated to his prejudice, without first hearing his defence. *

Recovers
the power
of the
French mo-
narchy.

Du Guesclin now began to achieve the high emprise of re-annexing to the crown of France those provinces which the gallantry of the Black Prince had wrested from it. Charles could not give him many troops; but the noble knight sold

* D'Argentré, Histoire de Bretagne, liv. vii. c. 15.

his estates in order to raise men-at-arms, and his wife parted with the ornaments becoming her station, in order to purchase lances and harness. He was soon surrounded by four thousand soldiers. They were chiefly levied in Normandy, and their rendezvous was Caen. Du Guesclin threw an air of chivalry over his emprise, for he introduced the usage of fraternity of arms. He chose for his own brother, Olivier de Clisson, or Du Guesclin, a knight whose name is mentioned with honour in all the great battles of the time. These two Breton cavaliers signed at Pontoison the act of their fraternity, whereby they engaged to defend the estate, life, and honour of each other.*

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Com-
panionship
in arms be-
tween Du
Guesclin
and Olivier
de Clisson.

* Labineau, Hist. de Bretagne, vol. ii. p. 538. The treaty itself is so curious, that a life of Du Guesclin would be imperfect without it. "A tous ceux que ces lettres verront, Bertrand du Guesclin, Duc de Mouline, Connestable de France, et Olivier, Seigneur de Clisson, salut. Sçavoir faisons que pour nourrir bonne paix et amour perpetuellement entre nous et nos hoirs, nous avons promises, jurées et accordées entre nous les choses qui s'ensuivint. C'est à sçavoir que nous Bertrand du Guesclin voulons estre alliez, et nous allions à toujours à vous Messire Olivier, Seigneur de Clisson contre tous ceulx qui pevent vivre et mourir, exceptez le Roy de France, ses freres, le Vicomte de Rohan, et nos autres seigneurs de qui nous tenons terre : et vous promettons aidier et conforter de tout nostre pouvoir toutesfois que mestier en aurez, et vous nous en requerrez. Item, que ou cas que nul autre seigneur de quelque estat ou condition qu'il soit, à qui vous seriez tenu de foy et hom-

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Du Guesclin then fell upon the English at Pontvelain with the force of thunder : most of

mage, excepté le Roy de France, vous voudroit desheriter par puissance, et vous faire guerre en corps, en honneur, et en biens, nous vous promettons aidier, defendre, et secourir de tout nostre pooir, se vous nous en requerrez. Item, voulons et consentons que de tous et quelconques proufitz et droitz, qui nous pourront venir, et echoir dorenavant, tant de prisonniers pris de guerre par nous ou nos gens, dont le proufitz nous pourroit appartenir, comme de pais raençonné vous aiez la moitié entierement. Item, au cas que nous sçaurions aucune chose qui vous peust porter aucune dommage ou blasme, nous vous le ferons sçavoir et vous en accointerons le plutost que nous pourrons. Item, garderons vostre corps à nostre pooir, comme nostre frere. Et nous Olivier, Seigneur de Clisson, voulons estre alliez, et nous allions à toujours à vous Messire Bertrand du Guesclin dessus nommé, contre tous ceulx qui pevent vivre et mourir exceptez le Roy de France, ses freres, le Vicomte de Rohan, et nos autres seigneurs de qui nous tenons terre, et vous promettons aidier et confôrter de tout nostre pooir toutefois que mestier en aurez et vous nous en requerrez. Item, que au cas que nul autre seigneur de quel que estat ou condition qu'il soit, à qui vous seriez tenu de foi, ou hommage, excepté le Roy de France, vous voudroit desheriter par puissance, et vous faire guerre en corps, en honneur ou en biens, nous vous promettons aidier, defendre, et secourir de tout nostre pooir, si vous nous en requerrez. Item, voulons et consentons que de tous ou quelconques proufitz et droitz qui nous pourront venir et echoir dorenavant, tant de prisonniers pris de guerre par nous, ou nos gens, dont le proufit nous pourroit appartenir, comme de pais raençonne, vous aiez la moitié entierement. Item, au cas que nous sçaurions aucune chose qui vous peust

them were taken prisoners ; and Sir Robert Knowles, their leader, fled to Brittany, and concealed his head for shame, during the rest of his life in the castle of Derval.* The Black Prince was then at Bourdeaux, enfeebled by sickness : he had wasted his constitution in the peninsular war ; for the climate of Spain was not so favourable to the health of Englishmen in those days as it has been found in later times. Instead of being able to gird on his armour and display his chivalry, Edward had scarcely strength to follow the counsel of his leeches to return to England. He left the Duke of Lancaster to preserve the English dominion in France from total ruin.

porter dommage aucun ou blasme, nous vous la ferons sçavoir, et vous en accointerons le plutost que nous pourrons. Item, garderons vostre corps à nostre pooir comme nostre frere. Toutes lesquelles choses dessus nommée avons promises, accordées et jurées, promettons accordons et jurons sur les saintz evangiles de Dieu corporellement touchiez par nous, et chascun de nous, et par les foyes et sermens de nos corps bailliez l'un à l'autre tenir, garder, enteriner et accomplir l'un à l'autre, sans faire, ne venir en contre par nous, ne les nostres, ou de l'un de nous, et les tenir fermes et agreables à tous jours. En temoing desquelles choses nous avons fait mettre nos seaulz à ces presentes lettres, lesquelles nous avons fait doubler. Donnée à Pontoison, le 24 jour d'Octobre l'an de grace mille trois cens soixante et dix.

* Argentré, viii.3, 4.

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The year 1371 was a blank in the chivalric history of Du Guesclin, but the following spring he continued his attempt to subjugate Poictou. Many cities were sacked; and the abhorrence with which the cruelties of Olivier de Clisson were regarded by his own army may warrant the conjecture that inhumanity was not general. At the close of 1372, Poictou was entirely subdued. In the next year, Du Guesclin continued his conquests, and Guienne became the subject of his victories. The Duke of Lancaster was the successor of the power, but not of the chivalry, of the Black Prince; and De Mountfort, whom Edward sent to France as the opponent of Du Guesclin, not only recovered nothing, but lost much of Brittany; and thus, by the genius and fortune of one chivalric hero, all the bright visions of glory created in the fervid imaginations of our Edwards were blighted, and France recovered her station among the high powers of Europe.

Du Guesclin continued in the service of Charles. The last years of his life it is impossible to describe, so contradictory are his biographers. Some declare that the calumnies of Parisian courtiers deprived him of the favour of Charles, and that he lost his office of Constable. However this may have been, it is certain that in the year 1380 he commanded the

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French troops in Auvergne, and went to lay siege to Randan, a little fortress some leagues from Mendes, in the Govandau, between the sources of the Lot and the Alleir. The place, until then so little known, immediately became famous, in French history, for the loss which France sustained before its walls of one of her prowtest knights. Du Guesclin, who, according to the wont of chivalry, had vowed not to sheath his sword while an enemy's lance was raised, pressed the siege with vigour, when he was attacked by a malady which was soon found to be mortal. He beheld the approach of death with Christian intrepidity, and he died while exhorting the knights around his bed to the duties of devotion to God, loyalty to the King, and mercy to those who were the objects of war. It was his wish to be buried at Dinan, in Brittany, but the King commanded the abbey of St. Denys to be the place *; and in kindness and gratitude, he

Du Gues-
clin's death
before Ran-
dan.

* Voltaire says, that Bertrand du Guesclin was the first person over whom a funeral oration was delivered, and who was interred in the church destined for the tombs of the kings of France. He adds, "Son corps fut porté avec les mêmes cérémonies que ceux des souverains; quatre princes du sang le suivaient; ses chevaux selon la coutume du temps, furent présentées dans l'église à l'évêque que officiait, et qui les bénit en leur imposant les mains. Les détails sont peu importants; ils font connoître l'esprit de chevalerie. L'attention que s'attiraient les grands chevaliers célèbres par

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was anxious that a lamp should always hang over the tomb, in order that posterity might never lose remembrance of his great deeds.*

leurs faits d'armes s'étendait sur les chevaux qui avoient combattre sans eux." *Essai sur les Mœurs*, c. 78.

* Anselme in his *Palais de l'Honneur*, gives an amusing account of the chivalric rules for sepulchral monuments. They were better observed in France than in any other country, and even there they were not very scrupulously attended to. "They are," however, as Gough remarks, (*Sepulchral Antiquities*, vol. i. p. cxvii.) "a curious specimen of monumental punctilio. Knights and gentlemen might not be represented by their coats of arms, unless they had lost their lives in some battle, single combat, or rencontre with the prince himself, or in his service, unless they died and were buried within their own manors or lordships; and then to show that they died a natural death in their beds, they were represented with their coat of armour ungirded, without a helmet, bareheaded, their eyes closed, their feet resting against the back of a greyhound, and without any sword. Those who died on the day of battle, or in any mortal rencontre, on the victorious side, were to be represented with a drawn sword in their right hand, and a shield in their left, their helmet on, which some think ought to be closed, and the visor let down, in token that they fell fighting against their enemies, having their coat of arms girded over their arms, and at their feet a lion. Those who died in prison, or before they had paid their ransom, were represented on their tombs without spurs or helmet, without coat of arms or swords, only the scabbard girded to, and hanging at their sides. Those who fell in battle or rencontre on the side of the conquered were to be represented without coats of arms, the sword at the side and in the scabbard, the visor raised and

The epitaph, on account of its simplicity, deserves mention. “ Ici gist noble homme Messire Bertrand du Guesclin, Comte de Longueville, et Connétable de France, qui trepassa au chastel neuf de Randan en Gisaudan, en la Sénéchaussée de Beauncaire, le 13 jour de Juillet, 1380. Priez Dieu pour lui.” *

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His character.

Such was the life of a simple Breton gentleman, who with no advantage of birth, no powerful patronage, but with only his good sword to speed him, raised himself to the highest rank in the French nation, and his was one of the numer-

open, their hands joined on their breasts, and their feet resting against the back of a dead and overthrown lion. The child of a governor, or commander in chief, if born in a besieged city, or in the army, however young he died, was represented on his tomb, armed at all points, his head on his helmet, and clad in a coat of mail of his size at the time of his death. The military man, who at the close of his life took on him a religious habit and died in it, was represented completely armed, his sword by his side on the lower part; and on the upper the habit of the order he had assumed, and under his feet the shield of his arms. The gentleman who has been conquered and slain in the lists, in a combat of honour, ought to be placed on his tomb, armed at all points, his battle-axe lying by him, his left arm crossed over the right. The gentleman victorious in the lists was exhibited on his tomb, armed at all points, his battle-axe in his arms, his right arm crossed over the left.”

* Argentré, Hist. de Bretagne, liv. viii. Velly in an. and Memoires de Du Guesclin, ad fin.

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ous instances in the middle ages where the personal merit of chivalry was of more avail than the hereditary right of aristocracy. In many of the essentials of knighthood, in lofty daring, sageness, and generosity, he was as preux a cavalier as the English Chandos' and Mannys ; but there was none of that gallant grace over this darling of French chivalry, which distinguished the heroes of Edward III. He was so sensible of his own personal plainness, that he never cultivated the pleasing amenities of chivalry ; but his modesty did not pass unrewarded * : for the ladies of Brittany were so deeply read in the romances of their country, that they loved only men who were famous for martial deeds. Du Guesclin was twice married : of the first of his wives nothing is on record ; the other is said to have been a woman of beauty, fortune and wit. She was an heiress in Brittany, and Charles of Blois promoted the union, hoping to attach him to his court. Her reputation as a prophetess was extensive, and her prediction of his success in a particular battle being verified, her vanity became interested in his fate. She had her days of good and of evil fortune, and if historians

* “Jamais, *disoit il*, je ne serai aimé ne conveïs (bienvenu)
Ainçois serai des dames très toujours éconduits,
Car biensçais que je suis bien laid et malfettis,
Mais puis que je suis laid, être veux bien hardis.”

Vie du Connetable du Guesclin.

have written his annals faithfully, Bertrand often repented, both as a soldier and a husband, when he did not regard her councils.*

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Decline of
chivalry.

The history of France after these circumstances was the struggle between the ruling powers and the people regarding the right of taxation. The civil wars that devastated France and Flanders, in consequence of this dispute, bore none of the character of chivalry; for monarchical and aristocratical haughtiness disdained to consider as their companions in arms those whom they called the raskal-rout, the base-born rabble. It was only wars of ambition that were graced and softened by chivalric generosity; and therefore all was blood, and horror, and confusion, when the houses of Orleans and Burgundy distracted France with their feuds. The pages of Monstrelet, the chronicler of the events to which I have alluded, form a gloomy contrast to the splendid scenes of Froissart. The field, indeed, continues to gleam with lances, and banners and pennons wave in the

* Chastelet, Hist. de Du Guesclin, p. 33. There were no children of either of these marriages. Du Guesclin, however, left a son, *par amours*. The last male heir of this family died in the year 1783, an officer in the French army. In the time of Napoleon, a Madame de Givres asserted and proved her descent from the Constable, and Bonaparte granted her a pension of 6000 franks a year.

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Proof of it.

wind, but the spirit of honour and courtesy no longer hung over them, — and the prostrate soldier sued for mercy in vain. Knights were created before and after battles : tournaments, jousts, and other splendid shows were held ; and as the essence of chivalry decayed its splendour seemed to brighten. An affair in Liege, in the year 1408, will show the manner of warfare when chivalry was on the wane. John Duke of Burgundy, John of Bavaria, the lords of Hainault and Orange, and other princes, appeared in arms to succour the Bishop of Liege, brother-in-law of the Duke of Bavaria, whom the Liegeois had expelled from the city. Instead of following the counsel of the new bishop and his father the Lord de Pier-vves, of remaining within the walls, and wearing out the enemy by a defensive war, the Liegeois, when the bells of the city announced break of day, left their fortifications, resolved to give battle to the well-appointed lines of Burgundy. Their numbers were fifty thousand ; but except some pieces of artillery, five or six hundred men armed like cavalry, and a few score of stipendiary English archers, they were the disorderly population of the city. Their confidence of success was exalted to madness ; and when the hour of battle arrived, they would not suffer their nominal leader, the Lord Pier-vves, to take any means of prudence. It is curious to

mark the difference of character in the two parties. There was a wild frantic kind of courage in the Liegeois, inspired by the consideration, that they were fighting for their lives and liberties. Their foemen had no such deep-seated enthusiasm : they moved to battle as sportively as to a joust; while their commanders were gaily exhorting their men-at-arms to behave themselves gallantly against the enemy, a rude and ignorant people who had rebelled against their lord, and who confidently trusted in their superior numbers for success. “ If the warriors of Burgundy,” (concluded the martial orators) “ will dash into career with knight-like courage victory will be theirs, and they will gain everlasting honour.”

The cannon of the Liegeois did not check the advance of the chivalry; and though the burghers endured well and courageously the close encounter, yet the prudence of their General was verified, that they could oppose no effectual resistance to the nobles and gentlemen trained to war, and armed in proof. After an hour's struggle, the line of the Liegeois being charged in rear by a detachment of horse, six thousand of them quitted the ranks, and fled towards a village distant half a league from the field of battle. The cavalry charged them several times, beating down and slaying them without mercy.

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The main body of the Liegeois was yet unsubdued; and for half an hour the noise of the warcries was dreadful; the Burgundians and Hainaulters shouting, under their banners, "Our Lady for Burgundy!" "Our Lady for Hainault!" and the Liegeois ringing the air with the cry, "St. Lambert for Pier-vves!" The detachment of horse returned, and fell upon the rear of the Liegeois, and pierced it through: a great slaughter was made, for none were admitted to ransom. Near the banner of the Duke of Burgundy, where the conflict raged with most fierceness, the Lord of Pierre-vves and his two sons (one was the new bishop) fell, and no consideration for their chivalry or religious profession saved them from death. The coolness of the Duke of Burgundy excites the praise of the historian; and no apology is thought necessary for his conduct, when on being asked, after the defeat, if they should cease from slaying the Liegeois he replied, "Let them all die together; let no prisoners be made; let none be admitted to ransom." *

Such was the spirit in which war was conducted where the humanising influence of

* Monstrelet, vol. ii. c. 3. The battle between the Burgundians and Dauphinois, in August, 1421, was fought with similar cruelty. Vol. v. c. 62.

chivalry was unfelt; and I shall not attempt to detail the more horrid crimes of the sacking of towns.

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In the short war between France and England in the reign of our Henry V., nothing peculiarly chivalric can be marked in the conduct of the French. The great second series of our wars with France, though not characterised by knightly splendour, is not without knightly interest. France could seldom boast of braver cavaliers than Dunois, Lahire, and the chevalier Poton de Saintrailles. During the memorable siege of Orleans at the request of the English the festivities of Christmas suspended the horrors of war, and the nativity of the Saviour was commemorated by the sound of martial music. Talbot, Suffolk, and other ornaments of English chivalry, made presents of fruits to the accomplished Dunois, who vied with their courtesy by presenting to Suffolk some black plush he wished for as a lining for his dress in the then winter season. The high-spirited knights of one side challenged the proudest knights of the other, as their predecessors in chivalry had done. It is observable, however, that these jousts were not held in honour of the ladies, but the challenge always declared, that if there were in the other host a knight so generous and loving of his country as

Little chivalry in the second great series of French and English wars.

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 — invited to present himself.

Combats of
 Pages.

History has preserved to us one circumstance, which is interesting, because it marks the change of manners in the attendants on the cavaliers. We have seen that in early times each knight had his squire, who gave arms to his lord, and frequently mingled in the battle himself. The knight, now, had only his page, who buckled on his armour, and rendered similar acts of personal service ; and, instead of generous emulation of the enterprises of cavaliers, a mock combat was held between the striplings of the two armies. Each party had its leader, and its standard. Their shields were made of osier twigs, and their javelins were blunted. On the first day the advantage was with the French, but on the second, the English youths bore away the standard of their antagonists, and the reputation of victory was theirs. *

Further de-
 cay of chi-
 valry.

After this national contest chivalry continued to decline in France. The civil wars had left that country one universal scene of vice and misrule, and the people looked to the King for some measure of protection. So exhausted were the

* All these curious particulars of ancient manners are contained in the *Histoire de Jeanne d'Arc*, of M. Le Brun des Charmettes.

nobility by their wars with England, that they declared their want of power to lead into the field the customary number of knights ; and they therefore prayed a remission of military duty. Charles willingly granted this petition ; and no opposition was made to his establishing a force which he might either use against the barons themselves or the nation's enemies. The importance of mercenaries had been extending itself ever since the reign of Philip Augustus, when they were first introduced ; for the old levies of feudatories and vassals had in France as in England been found insufficient for the great purposes of war. But the new bands of stipendiary adventurers were never a very important branch of the French military force, for the kings could not pay for many ; and these hired soldiers were commonly infantry or lightly armed horse, who could not contend in the battle-field with mail-clad knights and squires. National feelings favoured the constitutional levy ; and the kings endeavoured to render the country's chivalry of sufficient service by enlarging the time of their attendance. St. Louis increased the period of military duty from forty days to two months, and Philip the Fair doubled the time determined by St. Louis.

Such was the state of affairs in France, when, in the year 1444, Charles established fifteen com-

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panies of cavalry. Each company consisted of one hundred lances, and each of these men-at-arms had his archers, a coultier or soldier, whose weapon of offence resembled a knife rather than a sword, and his personal attendant the page. Every one of these followers served on horseback, and the whole force amounted to nine thousand cavalry. This was intended to be a permanent establishment; and it was understood that the soldiers should be paid out of the state finances, and should not like the mercenaries of former times subsist by plunder. These companies of ordonnance have ever been regarded as the foundation of the French standing army. Here, then, closes the public military history of chivalry in France. The new soldiers were stipendiaries, not cavaliers: they were not educated for chivalry: they had not passed through the ranks of page and squire; and not being necessarily gentlemen by name or arms, their deeds could not be similar to those which sprang from the oath of the cavalier. This new military force caused the feudatories of the crown no longer to bring their vassals with them to war, except in certain extreme cases, where the *arriere ban* was summoned, and then the appearance was but a faint picture of the ancient chivalry. Thus the usage of banners and pennons ceased, and with them the great distinctions of bannerets and knights, be-

cause those titles no longer conferred honour and command.* The title of knight lost its military character; and, instead of being bestowed with religious solemnities, after a long and painful education, it was often given to very young men without any martial training whatever, when they first stepped from their father's castles into the busy scenes of life. There was another circumstance which sullied the glory of knighthood;—I mean the bestowing of its title upon persons who were not of the military class. The exact time when this innovation upon chivalry took place it is impossible to ascertain, and I wish not to weary my readers with profitless antiquarian researches. Knights of the law, as distinguished from those of arms, were known in the thirteenth century; and when once the clergy, who exercised the judicial functions, began to assume military titles, (which they did from their spirit of engrossing every thing that was honourable,) the matter soon grew into a custom: the lawyers claimed the privilege of wearing gold, and in every point asserted the equality of the law, with the chivalry of a country.† By degrees the title of knighthood began to be applied

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Abuses in
conferring
knighthood.

* Daniel, *Histoire de la Milice Francaise*, liv. iv. c. 1. Monstrelet, vol. viii. c. 46. Velly, tome v. p. 394.

† Boutillier, *La Somme rurale*, compilée par lui, p. 671. Abbeville, 1486.

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to men distinguished for their learning or talents, or who for less honourable causes were favoured by the King. This application of chivalric honours to persons who were not within the order of chivalry was viewed with a jealous and malignant eye by the military knights, who were not satisfied with the consideration in which they were held when other classes of society copied their titles, and shone by the reflection of martial glory. Their fierce minds felt no respectful sympathy for the literary and intellectual awarders of justice, and they wished that the lance of the knight-errant should continue to be the only refuge of the injured. In effect the title of knight became of little estimation, and in the history of France, through the fifteenth century, we seldom read of the conferring of the order of chivalry upon soldiers in the field of battle.

Chivalry thus decayed in France, before gunpowder became the chief instrument of death. Though artillery had been known so early as the battle of Cressy, it did not immediately come into general use. During the last half of the fourteenth century, the French used it in sieges, and sometimes in the field. But still, when Charles VII. established the companies of ordonnance already mentioned, the strength of the army was cavalry. Soon afterwards the French armies began to consist of infantry; for the soldiers of France

were mercenaries, and they were drawn from Switzerland, a country which from its poverty and mountain-form could not boast of many knights and plumed steeds.

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While chivalry was losing its martial vigour in the French monarchy, some of the nobility of France preserved it in their castles in all its stateliness and grace. But the records of those times are so faint and imperfect, that any thing beyond the mere circumstance of their general chivalry cannot be learned.

The annals of Burgundy are somewhat more satisfactory. The Dukes of Burgundy became sovereigns of Flanders, and impressed on that country a character of chivalry and romance. Tournaments, jousts, and other knightly shows, graced the wealth of the Flemish cities, at the time when the commercial cities of Italy were distinguished for classic elegance and taste. The court of the Dukes of Burgundy was so high in fame for the lofty daring and gallant grace of chivalric enterprise, that when Constantinople fell under the Moslem yoke, the hearts of the noble Burgundian knights glowed with the bold and pious desire of recovering the metropolis of eastern Christendom. The desire perished, for it was not supported by the other powers of Europe; and Burgundy, deprived of its hope of leading the lances of the West, in a

Burgundy.

Its chivalry.

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cause so well worthy of them, is only interesting in the history of chivalry for its gracefulness and splendour. To present the reader with detailed statements of all its martial games would be tedious and unprofitable ; but one of them possesses considerable interest, as displaying a very singular state of manners, and proving that the romances, and tales of chivalry, were often realised.

The romance of
Burgundian tourna-
ments.

In the year 1468, the sister of Edward IV. of England married Charles Duke of Burgundy. The banquets and balls which testified the general joy were varied by a martial exercise, called the Passage of the Tree of Gold. It was held in the market-place at Bruges, which, on that occasion, exchanged its wonted appearance for one of chivalric gaiety. The ground was unpaved, and sanded like a royal tilt-yard ; and galleries were erected around for the reception of the nobles and dames of Burgundy and the wealthy merchants of Flanders. A door, at one end of the lists, painted with a tree of gold, was defended by the Bastard of Burgundy, who jousted with such cavaliers as, by the permission of the ladies, were allowed to deliver the knight of the Tree of Gold of his emprise. According to the humour of the times, many knights appeared in fantastic disguises. One knight, though lusty and young, approached the lists in a litter, and

presented every mark of feebleness and age. He requested leave to joust for that once only, and declared that he would then retire to some peaceful cell, and forget, in devotion and penitence, the vain delights of war.

At another time, the dames and damsels were informed that a noble knight, who wished to joust, was without the lists; but that he would not present himself to the ladies of Burgundy until they perfectly knew his tale. All his life he had loved a lady of Sclavonia; and although she had not altogether accepted him as her servant, yet she had encouraged him to hope. His mental sufferings for her love deserved compassion; but she, forgetting that feminine virtue, and continuing her pride, had not treated his devotion as it merited; and he, therefore, for the nine months which preceded his appearance at Bruges, had lived among rocks and mountains, a prey to melancholy. When, however, the lady heard of this unquestionable proof of his passion, she repented of her ingratitude, and had sent to him a damsel-errant, who was now his guide. She had beguiled the tedious way to Bruges by telling him that the pleasures of love could only be reached by labours, desires, and sufferings; that pain gave a zest to enjoyment, and that the greatest offence against love was despair. The lady had bade him hope;

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the damsel-errant had counselled him to go upon some chivalric quest, in order to dissipate his melancholy ; and she had promised to accompany him, in order to deliver the tale of his adventures to his lady-mistress.

The dames and maidens of Burgundy accorded permission to this zealous servant of love to attempt the emprise of the Passage of the Tree of Gold. He was preceded into the lists by three men, dressed like Moors, and a lady followed, mounted on a white palfrey, and dressed, as the people thought, like a damsel-errant. She led the knight, who bestrode a cheval de lance, and afterwards came four nobles, clad in the habits of Sclavonia, with the words “ Le Chevalier Esclave ” worked on their robes. He jousted with a knight who supplied the place of the Bastard of Burgundy, but with what degree of gallantry history is silent. *

Last gleams
of chivalry
in France.

I now return to France, whose chivalry, even in the last days of its existence, is interesting ; for if ever the bright glory of one man could have changed the manners of his age, the knight without fear and without reproach would have revived the chivalric fame of his country. Pierre

Life of
Bayard.

* Memoires d'Olivier de la Marche, vol. ix. c. 2. of the Collection des Memoires relatifs à l'Histoire de la France.

Terrail, or Du Terrail, known under the name of Bayard, was born in the year 1476, at the chateau of Bayard, in Dauphiny. His family was of ancient and noble race, and boasted that their ancestors had fought at the battles of Cressy and Poitiers. His own father had been so severely wounded in the service of his country, that he quitted the army before the usual time for retiring. He passed the evening of his life in Dauphiny, occupied in the education of his children, of whom Peter was the only one that aspired to military glory. His wishes were grateful to his father; and his uncle, the Bishop of Grenoble, promised to introduce him to the Duke of Savoy. In his paternal home Peter Bayard had learned some of the duties of the page of early chivalric times: like him he ministered to his father and his guests at table; and he had acquired admirable skill in horsemanship. The Bishop took the youth to Chambery, the then residence of the Duke, and by the grace of manner with which he attended his uncle at the dinner-table, and by a fine display of horsemanship, the Duke regarded him with kindness, and placed him in his service. Bayard was then about thirteen years old. Not many months afterwards he became an attendant of the King of France; for the Duke of Savoy, preferring Bayard's interests to his own, wished

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to advance his fortunes. Charles VIII. put him into the household of the Seigneur de Ligny, where he remained till he was seventeen years old, when he was called into the class of the gentlemen of the royal court. Besides acquiring the military exercises of his time, he graced his imagination with fairy and romantic tales: he was a knight in spirit and purpose, and he now aspired to gain the favour of the ladies by the prowess of his chivalry. A very few days after he had quitted his office of page, he broke a lance in a joust with one of the most distinguished cavaliers of the day, and his fame was bruited over all France. He remained all his life in the service of the French kings. The theatre of his exertions was Italy; but, as a very able pen has lately traced the revolutions of that interesting country*, I need not follow him through all his chevasance.

Such matters as display the points of his personal character, and show the remaining chivalric features of the time, come, however, within my province. In 1501, he alone sustained on a narrow bridge the efforts of two hundred cavaliers, who attacked him. It was then that he obtained from the King a device having for its emblem a porcupine, with the words

* Perceval's History of Italy, vol. ii. c. 8.

“*Vires agminis unus habet.*” At the taking of Brescia, he received a dangerous wound, and he remained awhile in a private house. When he was about to depart, his hostess wished to present him with two thousand pistoles for the gratitude she felt at his having preserved her honour and her fortune; and he accepted the money only for the purpose of giving it to her daughters, as their marriage-portions. So highly was he esteemed, that Chabannes, a marshal of France, and Humbercourt, and D’Aubigny, general officers, all of higher rank and older service than Bayard, fought under his orders. Yet he never rose to high commands. His greatest dignity was that of lieutenant-general of Dauphiny.

But the most amusingly characteristic story of Bayard regards his gallantry. When he was page to the Duke of Savoy, he loved one of the attendants of the Duchess; but the passion either was not mutual, or was not graced with any character of romance, for a few years afterwards the damsel married the Seigneur de Fleuxas. Bayard met her at the house of the widow of his first master, the Duke of Savoy. During supper, the lady of Fleuxas praised the chivalry in tournaments of her early admirer in such high terms, that he blushed for very modesty; and she added, that as he was now residing with a family who had been the first to cherish him, it would be great

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blame in him, if he did not prove himself as gallant a knight as he had done before. The answer of Bayard was that of a polite cavalier; for he requested her to tell him what he could do that would please the good and honourable assembly, his Lady of Savoy, and, above all the rest, her fair self. She advised him to hold a tournament. "Truly," replied Bayard, "it shall be done as you wish. You are the first lady whose beauty and grace attracted my heart. I know that my salutations of you can only be those of courtesy, for I should lose my labour were I to solicit your love, and I would rather die than accomplish your dishonour." He then prayed her to give him one of her sleeves, for he said that he should have need of it in the approaching tournament. The lady accordingly took it from her dress, and he attached it to his.*

* The old French, in which this dialogue was held, is exceedingly interesting and expressive. "Monseigneur de Bayard, mon amy, voicy la premiere maison ou avez esté nourry, ce vous seroit grand honte si ne vous y faisiez congnoistre, aussi bien qu'avez fait ailleurs. *Le bon chevalier respondit*, Madame, vous savez, bien que des ma jeunesse vous ay aymée, prisée et honorée, et si vous tiens à si saige et bien enseigné, que ne voulez mal à personne, et encores a moy moins que à un autre. Dites moy, s'il vous plaist que voulez vous que je face pour donner plaisir à Madame ma bonne maistresse, à vous sur toutes, et au

The martial pastime was held, and after the supper which succeeded, it was enquired to whom should the prizes (the sleeve and a ruby) be given. The knights, the ladies, and even those who had tourneyed with him, accorded it to Bayard. But he declared that the honour was not his; but that if he had done any thing well, Madame de Fleuxas was the cause, for she had given him her sleeve. He, therefore, prayed that she might be permitted to act according to her judgment and prudence. The Seigneur de Fleuxas knew too well the noble character of

reste de la bonne et belle compaignée qui est ceans. *La dame de Fleuxas lui dit alors.* Il me semble, Monseigneur de Bayard, mais que je ne vous ennuye point, que ferez foit bien de faire quelque tournoy en ceste ville, pour l'honneur de Madame qui vous en scaura très bon gré. Vous avez ici alentour force de vos compaignons gentils-hommes François et autres gentils-hommes de ces pays, lesquels s'y trouveront de bon cœur, et j'en suis assurée. Vrayment, *dit le bon chevalier*, puis que le voulez il sera faist. Vous estes la dame en ce monde qui a premierement acquis mon cœur à son service, par le moyen de vostre bonne grace. Je suis assuré que je n'en auray jamais que la bouche et les mains, car de vous requirir d'autre chose je perdrois ma peine, aussi sur mon ame j'aymerois mieulx mourir que vous presser de deshonneur. Bien vous prie que me veuillez donner un de vos manchons. Car j'en ay à besongner. La dame qui ne savoit qu'il en vouloit faire le lui bailla, et il le meit en la manche de son pourpoint, sans faire autre bruit." *Memoires*, vol. xiv. p. 397.

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Bayard to feel any jealousy at this compliment to his wife, but with the other judges of the tournament he immediately went to her and related the matter. She was delighted at Bayard's gallantry, and declared that as he had done her the honour to avow that her sleeve had made him gain the prize, she would preserve it all her life for the sake of his love. The ruby she gave to the cavalier, who had next distinguished himself to Bayard.

And thus lived the knight without fear and without reproach, till the retreat of the French out of Italy in 1524, when he was fatally wounded by a stone discharged from an *harquebouze*: He fell from his horse, crying, "Jesus, my Saviour, I am dead." He kissed the cross-handle of his sword; and there being no chaplain present, he confessed himself to his esquire, who then, by the knight's command, placed him against a tree, with his face turned towards the enemy; "because," said Bayard, "as I have never yet turned my back to the foe, I will not begin to do so in my last moments." He charged his esquire to tell the King that the only regret he felt at quitting life was the being deprived of the power of serving him any further. The Constable of Bourbon, as he was pursuing the French, found him in this state, and assured him that he pitied his lot. But Bayard replied, "It is not I who stand

in need of pity, but you who are carrying arms against your King, your country, and your oath.”

The news that he was mortally wounded quickly spread, and excited the deepest grief in the minds of both armies, for he was a valiant soldier and a generous foe. After a while he was removed to a tent and placed on a bed. He was shriven by a priest, and soon afterwards died, as, with true Christian piety, he was imploring his God and his Saviour to pardon his sins, and to show him mercy rather than justice. * He was buried at a convent of Minims, half a league from Grenoble, the principal town of his native country.

During some of the last years of his life, his Francis I. fine and chivalric spirit found a kindred soul in Francis I., who, it is remarkable, was the only French sovereign graced with any share of the character of chivalry. For, while the Plantagenets of England had shone as brilliantly by chivalric as by regal splendour, the Capetian princes of France could not present a king that displayed any powers beyond the ordinary qualities of

* The Memoires of Bayard, by one of his secretaries, have furnished me with the chief facts in this account of Bayard. A very excellent English translation of them has been lately published in two vols. post 8vo. The Memoires Du Bellay (Paris, 1573,) have supplied some deficiencies in the narration of the loyal serviteur.

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royalty. The valiancy, the liberality, the fine, open, and manly countenance, and the lofty form of the King, were altogether those of one of Charlemagne's paladins. His imagination was coloured with the gay and lively tints of romance, and so fondly did he dwell upon the fabulous glories of old, that in many a sportive moment he arrayed himself in the guise of the antique cavalier. But here our panegyric must cease ; for no preux knight would, like Francis, have pledged his solemn word to observe a treaty, and immediately afterwards have violated it. However unkingly and unknightly Charles V. might have deported himself in treating Francis in prison with severity, and although the terms of the treaty of Madrid were such as no noble victor would have imposed, still the obligation of the pledge of Francis's word should have been felt as sacred. A noble cavalier, a Chandos or Du Guesclin, would have disdained to obtain his liberty by signing a treaty which he intended to break as soon as he should leave his prison. "All is lost, Madam, except our honour," as the French King wrote to his mother after the battle of Pavia: a generous, chivalric expression ; and scarcely could it have been expected that he was the man who would have thrown away that honour.

The last faint gleam, however, of the sun of military chivalry in France fell upon Bayard

and his sovereign, Francis ; for after the battle of Marignan, in 1515, when they fought together against the Swiss, the King was, at his own request, knighted by the cavalier without fear and without reproach. After giving the accolade, Bayard addressed his sword, “Certainly, my good sword, you shall hereafter be honoured as a most precious relic, and never shall be drawn except against Turks, Moors, and Saracens.” He then twice leaped up for joy, and plunged his trusty weapon into its sheath. *

Soon after the days of Francis I. the title of knighthood became an empty name : it was preserved as the decoration of nobility and lawyers ; and, from respect to the ancient glories of their nation, kings received it at their baptism. † Mont-

* *Memoires de Bayard*, in the great collection of French *Memoires*, vol. xv. p. 458. “Et puis après par maniere de jeu, cria haultement l’espée en la main dextre : tu es bien heureuse d’avoir aujourd’hui à un si vertueux et puissant roy donné l’ordre de chevalerie. Certes ma bonne espée, vous serez moult bien reliques gardée et sur toutes autres honorée. Et ne vous porteray jamais, si ce n’est contre Turcs, Sarrasins, ou Maures, et puis fait deux faults, et après remeit au fourreau son espée.” This sword has been lost.

† This mode of receiving knighthood had, however, been stealing into a custom for some time. The earliest instance I have ever met with was in the case of an infant son of Charles VI. (A. D. 1371,) who was knighted by Du Guesclin, a cavalier who, one would think, was sufficiently jealous of the honour of chivalry. After the ceremonies of baptism,

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luc, that man of blood, was the last French soldier who received it in the field of battle. The accolade was given to him by the Duke d'Anguien, after the engagement of C  risolles, in 1544.

Abolition
of tourna-
ments.

The amusements of chivalry were soon abolished. The accidental death of Henry II. in a tournament*, in the year 1559, did much to indispose the minds of the people from chivalric sports; and when in the following year Prince Henry de Bourbon Montpensier was killed, in consequence of his horse falling under him, while careering round the lists, tournaments ceased for ever; and with their abolition, as Voltaire says, the ancient spirit of chivalry expired in France; for that country, after the death of Henry II., was plunged in fanaticism, and desolated by the wars of religion. The

Du Guesclin drew his sword, and putting it naked into the hand of the naked child, (*nudo tradidit ensem nudum*), said to him, "Sire, I give you this sword, and put it into your hand; and pray God that he will give you such a noble heart that you may prove as true a knight as any of your illustrious ancestors." So, too, Monstrelet, in his account of the events in the year 1433, says, that the Duchess of Burgundy was delivered of a son at Dijon, who was knighted at the font. Vol. vii. p. 147.

* Part of Segar's account of this tournament is too interesting to be omitted. "At the fourth course, by marvellous

spirit did not survive the forms of chivalry; for the intercourse with Italy introduced into France new opinions and feelings. Machiavelian

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Extinction
of chivalry.

misadventure, the King became hurt with a splinter of the adversary's lance, which pierced his eye so deep, as thereby his brain was much bruised. Thus was the nuptial feast disturbed, and joy converted to sorrow. Such is the state of worldly things: gladness is ever followed by sadness, and pleasure accompanied by pain. The rest of the troop who were ready to run were with that accident marvellously amazed, and not knowing what to do, every man let fall his lance, and cursed such triumphs. Some pressed to carry his person home, and others (as touched to the heart) shut their eyes from seeing a spectacle so miserable. The ladies likewise and gentlewomen of the court turned their faces from beholding, and closed their eyes with tears. To conclude, the whole number of courtiers were stricken with sorrow not explicable. The citizens, also, and, generally, all the subjects of that kingdom, were perplexed to see the tragical event of that disastrous triumph, which was intended to congratulate a new peace and an honourable alliance. The form and face of the city were thus converted from exceeding joy to unspeakable sorrow: some held up their hands to heaven, others made haste to the churches, and every one, with abundance of sighs and sobs, cried out, beseeching God to grant the King recovery; as if every man's well doing had thereon depended. Then the physicians and surgeons, not only of France but of the Low Countries, came thither to show their skill, using all art and endeavour that might be; but the splinters of the lance had pierced the King's eye so deeply, as the tenderness of the place could not suffer it to be taken out nor seen (the brain also being pierced), no means there were to cure the wound.

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politics banished the open, manly demeanour of chivalry; and the most disgusting profligacy equally distinguished the ladies. It is amusing to observe that, long after the extinction of chivalry in France, the apparent homage and devotion of chivalric love still continued, although it was no longer sustained by virtue. Love, sublimed into idolatry, breathes in every page of the heroic romances which succeeded the romances of chivalry, and reflect the feelings of the nation; and so late as the reign of Louis XIV. a ruffled and well-powdered French General, whose soul was not illumined by a single gleam of the character of a *preux chevalier*, would fancy himself the very pink of sentiment, and sigh at the feet of his mistress,

“ Pour meriter ton cœur, pour plaire a vos beaux yeux,
J’ai fait la guerre aux rois, je l’aurois fait aux dieux.”

The King, therefore, tormented with extreme pain, fell into a burning fever, whereof at the end of eleven days he died. In all which time he did never weep, nor speak any word that might be imputed to pusillanimity; but most magnanimously took leave of life. Only this he said, that seeing he was destined to die in arms, he would have been much better contented to have lost his life in the field than in those domestic pastimes.” Segar, of Honour, lib. iii. c. 40.

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PROGRESS OF CHIVALRY IN SPAIN.

General Nature of Spanish Chivalry.....Religion and Heroism.....Gallantry.....Blending of Spanish and Oriental Manners.....Its beneficial Tendencies.....Peculiarities of Spanish Chivalry.....Forms of Knighthood.....Various Ranks of Knights.....Spanish Poetry.....Heroes of Chivalry.....Pelayo.....Bernardo del Carpio.....And incidentally of Charlemagne's Expedition into Spain.....The Life of the Cid.....His early ferocious Heroism.....His singular Marriage.....Enters the Service of King Ferdinand.....The Cid's Chivalric Gallantry.....He is knighted.....Death of King Ferdinand.....The Cid becomes the Knight of Sancho, King of Castile.....Mixture of Evil and Good in the Cid's Character.....Supports the King in his Injustice.....The Cid's romantic Heroism.....Sancho's further Injustice opposed by him.....Death of Sancho.....Instance of the Cid's virtuous Boldness.....Character of Alfonso, Successor of Sancho.....Story of his chivalric Bearing.....The Cid's second Marriage.....Is banished from Alfonso's Court.....Becomes the Ally of the Moors.....But recalled.....Is banished again.....Singular Story of the Cid's unknighly Meanness.....Fortunes of the Cid during his Exile.....The Cid's chivalric Nobleness and Generosity.....Is recalled by Alfonso.....The Cid captures Toledo.....and Valentia.....Story of Spanish Manners.....The Cid's unjust Conduct to the Moors.....The unchivalric Character of the Cid's Wife

*and Daughters.....The Cid recalled by Alfonso.....
 The Marriages of his Daughters.....Basely treated by
 their Husbands.....Cortez at Toledo to decide the Cause
Picture of ancient Manners.....Death of the Cid
His Character.....Fate of his good Horse.....
 Spanish Chivalry after his Death.....Gallantry of a
 Knight.....The Merits of Missals decided by Battle.
Passage of Arms at Orbigo.....Knights travel and
 joust for Ladies' Love.....Extinction of Spanish Chi-
 valry.*

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V.

General
nature of
Spanish
chivalry.

SPANISH chivalry awakens the most splendid and romantic associations of the mind. Europe, with her active courage, — her jealousy of honour, — her superior religion; — Asia, with her proud and lofty deportment, — her fervid and sublimated imagination, and the magnificent ceremonial of her pomp, — formed the knight of Spain; and, in consequence of this influence of Orientalism on his character, he represents the stateliness of chivalry as perfectly as the English cavalier its adventurousness, and the French its gaiety.

Religion
and hero-
ism.

There was an interesting blending of religious enthusiasm and romantic heroism in the Spaniard. His warm and creative imagination transformed the patron-saint of his country into a knight. He always saw St. James at his side, mounted on a stately white horse, and fighting the battles of Christianity and Spain; and, as if

these chivalric exploits were not sufficient, he represented him as the professed and powerful champion of distressed damsels ; for he supposed that this celestial ally had freed the nation from paying the annual tribute of a hundred Christian virgins to their infidel enemies.*

Spain, too, appears to our fancy as the very land of chivalric love, — of love which was bred amidst difficulties and dangers, where the undistinguishable throng of “ hopes and fears that kindle hope ” gave a more imaginative cast to the feelings than can be known in the more settled frame of modern society. There was not only the feudal baron violating the laws of courtesy, as in other countries, but bands of Moors were careering over the plains, who did not think that woman was an object utterly unworthy of a perilous quest. Here, then, all the beautiful romance of knight-errantry might be realised ; and in the breast of the rescued damsel love would spring from gratitude. Gallantry.

* Warton justly observes that this apotheosis of chivalry, in the person of their own apostle, must have ever afterwards contributed to exaggerate the characteristical romantic heroism of the Spaniards, by which it was occasioned, and to propagate through succeeding ages a stronger veneration for that species of military enthusiasm to which they were naturally devoted. Warton, *Diss. on the Gesta Romanorum*.

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The germs of chivalry existed in the minds of the Visigoths, who overthrew the dominion of the Romans in Spain. Military investiture, respect for women, and the sports of hawking and hunting, were the new circumstances in Spanish character and manners: but in the times of those wretched barbarians, the Visigoths, it is in vain to search for the perfect developement of the chivalric character. Chivalry appears only in few and fitful gleams in those dark times; and her golden light did not shine in full and bright display till the days of the Arabians; and, throughout their long reign of seven centuries, it had a very remarkable effect on circumstances and characters. As its glory was personal, chivalry abated much of the fierceness of a religious or a national war; for the cavalier could admire, even in an enemy, qualities which it was his own pride and ambition to possess.

The nations met in the graceful encounter of the tournament, as well as in the more perilous battle-field; and the interchange of chivalric courtesies, when the image of war was exhibited, could not but mitigate the ferocity of real hostilities. At the Moorish or Christian festivals, a gallant soldier of the opposite religion would appear, and challenge the bravest of his adversaries to maintain the superiority of his nation and faith; and in maintaining that cause the

Blending of
Spanish and
Oriental
manners.

cavaleresque deportment of the combatants was admired, when the avowed object of their encounter was forgotten; for the object of the assembly was amusement; and the eye and fancy were addressed in these gentle exercises and proofs of arms. *

The people of the two religions insensibly mingled, and each adopted something of the thoughts and manners of the other. If the Christian taught the Moors to use the lance of courtesy, the Christian learnt from the Moors to throw the cane, which was afterwards such a favourite Spanish amusement. From them, too, the knights of Spain adopted the javelin, and used it instead of the lance. They were wont to hurl it as forcibly as any Asiatic or Grecian heroes could have done; for a greater defence than what was afforded by mail and a quilted jacket was required to resist the stroke. †

Its beneficial tendencies.

The poets who lived in the chivalric days of Spain invariably gave the moral and personal costume of chivalry to the Arabian as often as

* Painters are as good witnesses for manners as romance writers; and in Murphy's *Arabian Antiquities of Spain* there is an engraving from a picture in the *Alhamrā*, representing a martial game, wherein both Moors and Christians contended.

† Froissart, vol. ii. c. 44.

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to the European. Thus Calaynos, the Moor*, is as much celebrated in the romances of Spain as the Cid himself; and it was the general confession that the knights of Granada were gentlemen although Moors. † This amalgamation of character formed the basis of those unions between the Arabians and the Spaniards which are so frequently recorded in the history of the Peninsula, and which strike the reader as incredible. It has been thought for the glory of the nation to represent the struggle as of ceaseless duration for seven long centuries, and too fierce to allow of the sheathing of the sword: but these alliances were so common, that Spain often presented the appearance of a number of petty states, each attempting to draw the others into its vortex, rather than the general cause of the Cross warring with the Crescent. Independently of these alliances there was scarcely a Christian cavalier of fame who did not in the course of his military career wield his good sword in the ranks of the Musulmans.

* Calaynos, however, went out of fashion, not for want of merit in the hero, but by reason of the form of the verse in which he was celebrated. Thus the phrase, *Este no vale las coplas de Calainos*, passed into a proverb. Sarmiento, *Memorias para la Historias de la Poesia, y Poetas Espanoles*, p. 228.

† Caballeros Granadinos
Aunque Moros, hijos d'algo.

Among the blessings which sprang from this free intercourse, religious toleration was not the least valuable one. Spain, which in later times has been so remarkable for the cruelties of its bigotry, was in early days the only country of Europe where religious liberty could breathe. Since the Moors and Christians often treated each other as separate powers, mutual toleration ensued, and this liberal feeling in the minds of the Christians extended itself beyond the pale of their Moorish subjects and allies. The fathers of the Reformation were the Albigenses, many of whom were sheltered by the kings of Arragon, while their brethren were persecuted to death in France. No church, save that of England, was in such continued opposition to the papacy as the Spanish; and in every great dispute it espoused the cause of the heretics, as the assertors of the liberty of the human will were always called.

The humanities of chivalry were not limited to toleration or mercy, to the mosque or the field of battle, but Moors and Christians often lived in the same town, and commingled social charities. Friendships were formed, and, maugre the declamation of bigots, dearer affections attached the two nations. The knight was in consequence of the obligations of his chivalry the friend of the distressed; and when beauty

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pleaded, his heart forbad him from enquiring in what religion the damsel had been educated. The passion of love in the breast of the Spanish cavalier was not more fervid or intense than in the breast of the cavalier of any other country. If the Spaniard be considered as a Goth by birth, and an Arab by education, still his natural and artificial circumstances formed but the same character of passion ; for both the Goth and the Arab adored as well as loved their mistress, and regarded her as a divinity as well as an object of affection.

Peculiarities of
Spanish
chivalry.

There was a gravity, perhaps a jealousy, both qualities of Oriental origin, about the conduct of the Spanish knight, which were foreign to the nature of the chivalry of other countries. The expression of his feelings was unlike theirs. Bold metaphors, rich and varied imagery and glowing sentiments, are mixed with the simple developement of passion ; and these orientalisms of his verse are not the elaborate and artificial ornaments with which fiction dresses up her image of passion : but as the mind of the Spaniard had been trained by the Arab, it became natural to him to nourish his affection in the splendid dreamings of the East. If he borrowed ideas and fancies from the Moor, it must be remembered that he likewise freely communicated the character of his own system. In no Moham-

medan country was woman so high in moral rank as in Spain. The Musulman woman was not passion's object, but, like the lady in chivalry, she was the origin of honour; for she sat in the tournament as the judge of valour, and the Moorish knight received the guerdon of triumph from her hands. Asiatic jealousy abated something of its nature and its forms in Spain; for there woman mingled with man in social intercourse, and her beauties were not always shrouded by a veil.*

The forms of chivalric initiation in Spain were similar to those in other countries. The bath — confession — vigil in a church — mass — the spurs — the girding with the sword — the accolade, — these were the chief ceremonies. The knight by his oath expressed willingness to die either for the defence of his law, or of his king or country.† The sword was then ungirt from him by some person of honour, who by so doing was supposed to become his padrino, or godfather, in chivalry, and to confirm the knighthood thus bestowed. No circumstances could ever justify the cavalier in bearing arms against his padrino.

Forms of
knighthood.

* For proofs of this circumstance, I must again refer the reader to the engravings in Murphy's *Arabian Antiquities of Spain*.

† Pur su ley, pur su Sennor natural, pur su terra. *Partidas*, cited by Selden, *Titles of Honour*, part ii. cap. 4.

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He was, on the contrary, to defend him by his sword and his counsel to the utmost of his ability, and to be every thing to him, as a *man* was to his lord in feudal relation.

These were the ancient ceremonies; but they were simplified in subsequent times. The mere dubbing was then held sufficient; and, by a law of Ferdinand and Isabella, in 1476, it was ordained that it should be at the pleasure of the King to use the old forms or not, and that the dignity of knighthood should be equally illustrious if they were omitted.

Various
ranks of
knights.

The highest class of knights in Spain was formed of the Knights of the Spur, the *Cavalleros de Espuela d'Orada*. They were always *hidalgos*, or gentlemen of birth of three descents. Kings' sons were of this class of knighthood; and no one was crowned till he had been invested with the order. *

Among the privileges of a knight of the Golden Spur, it is curious to notice that no person could sit at table with him except one of his own rank; no one of an inferior order was permitted to deny the infallibility of his opinion, and to contradict him: and for offences against the state, a knight of this class was to be beheaded, and not put to death in the vulgar mode.

* *Partidas*, l. ii. tit. 21. lib. 36. tit. 2, &c.

The circumstances in his conduct which were punishable with degradation are interesting, as descriptive of Spanish manners. It was thought necessary to forbid him from stealing the arms of another knight, from selling his own, or losing them at play, or giving them to courtezans. The punishment of degradation, as consequent on the admission of improper persons into the order, is intelligible and just : his girdle and spur-leathers were also to be cut, if he exercised any trade ; except, indeed, in captivity, when he was kindly permitted to support his life by the best means of his ingenuity.*

The other class of knights was formed of cavalleros Armados, who enjoyed most of the privileges of nobility. A knight of this rank was free from the payment of taxes and tribute ; and so were the knights of the Golden Spur, not, however, as knights, but as hidalgos. The cavalleros d'Armados were always made by the king's own hand ; but the right of creating cavalleros d'Espuela d'Orada existed in the will of every cavalier of the order, though it was usually exercised only by the king.

These were the two bodies in which the chivalry of Spain was arranged. The title of Cavallero was also given to every man who was a

* Selden, Titles of Honour, part ii. c. 4.

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soldier, in consequence of holding his lands by a military and feudal tenure ; but he was not, from that circumstance, necessarily a knight. Regarding chivalry as an order of merit, the *cavalleros d'Espuela d'Orada* and the *cavalleros d'Armados* were the only true chivalric knights in Spain.

There were some interesting circumstances in Spanish chivalry. Thus, in Catalonia, besides the squire who bore his shield and lance, each knight was attended by an armed man, whose title was, Companion of the Knight, and who was considered as a gentleman that followed the art of chivalry. He was also attached to the knight by feudal relations ; for the knight was compelled to grant him land, or rent, in fealty. A knight who was entitled to be attended by this companion was a knight by creation, a *miles vero* ; and he who had not received the order of chivalry, although an *hidalgo*, was considered as a knight minor, whom, indeed, chivalry would have disowned, but that his birth, rank, and fortune, made him a part of the military state.*

It is curious to notice that, by the general laws of Spanish chivalry, it was usual for every knight to embrace a newly-made knight the first

* Tomich, *Conquestas de los Reyes de Aragon e los Comtes de Barcelona*, 1534, folio 23.

time he met him, in honour of faith and love ; CHAP. V.
and it was contrary to those laws for one knight
to affront another, unless he should first send his
defiance or publication of that breach of the
bond of companionship.

The pillars of Spanish chivalry were of the same quality and character as those of other countries. Spain had her military orders, her institutions of Calatrava, Saint James, and Alcantara ; while the militia of the Temple and the friars of the Hospital were richer in possessions in Spain than in any country of the West. She had, also, her ballads and romances, in prose and verse, descriptive of the wars and loves of chivalry : but I cannot discover, with some writers, that the chivalric muse sung either a sweeter or a higher strain in Spain than in France or England. Her minstrelsy, indeed, was peculiar, and so was her national character. On one side, longings for patriotic independence, and consequent hatred of the Moors ; on the other, the loves and friendships of humanity, unaffected by difference of religion or country. The Troubadour chaunted his lays of love and war in Spain ; and his appeals found a ready way to the heart in Arragon ; for of that part of the Peninsula the Provençal was the vernacular dialect.

Spanish
poetry.

CHAP. V.

Heroes of
chivalry.

Pelayo.

Spain is rich in her heroes, both of romance and chivalry. The Spaniard will not acknowledge that the Moor was, for a moment, left in tranquil possession of his conquest; and he points to a hero, named Pelayo, as collecting the remnants of the Christians in the mountains of Asturias, immediately after the general triumph of the Moorish arms. He resisted the Moors till his three hundred followers dwindled to thirty. His enemies then left him to perish, for hitherto his food had only been honey, found in the crevices of the rocks. But, in after times, the folly of this disdain was seen; for these thirty men were the nucleus round which the scattered Spaniards collected. *

* Our English translators of ancient Spanish poetry need not think, as they are inclined to do, that they are worshipping a shade in Pelayo. The Arabian History of Spain by Ahmadu-bn Muhammadi-bn Mūsa Abū Bakr Arrāzy, a writer of the fourth century of the Hegira, attests his existence in the manner stated in the text. This author, whose name I will not again attempt to transcribe, is one of the authorities of Mr. Shakspeare, whose able dissertation on the History of the Arabs in Spain accompanies Murphy's splendid work on the architecture of that country. Great expectations have always been entertained of the illustrations of Arabic-Spanish history which the Escorial manuscripts could furnish. The work of Casiri encouraged the most ardent hopes of a successful result of more patient enquiry; and nothing could promise better than the circumstance that his very learned and intelligent successor in the librarianship, D. José Antonio Conde, was engaged in the

Truth does not cast many gleams on Ber- CHAP. V.
nardo del Carpio, the next in time and rank Bernardo
of Spanish knights. If we may credit the his- del Carpio.

work. The results of his labours were published at Madrid in 1820 and 1821. I have not been able to meet with a copy of his work in the original Spanish, but I have found it mixed up with other matter in a French book, entitled "*Histoire de la Domination des Arabes et des Maures en Espagne, et en Portugal, depuis l'Invasion de ces Peuples jusqu'à leur Expulsion définitive; redigée sur l'Histoire traduite de l'Arabe en Espagnol de M. J. Conde. Par M. de Marlés.*" 3 vols. 8vo. Paris. 1825. From the preface of M. de Marlés it appears that D. Conde's book is entirely the tale of the Arabic historians, and not the judicious result of a critical comparison between these writers and the Spanish chroniclers. M. de Marlés has endeavoured to supply the deficiency, and to write a history of Spain from Mariana and others on the one hand, and D. Conde's Arabians on the other. He has entirely failed; for a more feeble work was never written. Much of the fault rests with his authorities; for his history is only another proof, of what we possessed a thousand instances before, that sufficient materials do not exist for the compilation of a good and complete Spanish history. The insufficiency of D. Conde's book to all real historical purposes appears in every page. Something, indeed, has been gained on the subject of the Moorish civil wars and dissensions, but such details are without interest. Little or nothing has been added to our stores on the subject of Pelayo, Charlemagne's invasion, the Cid, or the conclusion of the Moorish history; all points whereon information is so much wanted. These remarks apply only to Conde's researches into the political and civil history of Spain while under the dominion of the Moors, and not to his enquiries into the literary history of the Arabs.

CHAP. V. torians of his country, it was he who nourished, in the Asturias, the plant of national liberty ; for when Alfonso the Chaste would have made the land over which he ruled part of the dominions of Charlemagne, the nobility, headed by Bernardo, repelled the invader, and annihilated the French peerage at Fontarabbia. Much of this, perhaps the whole, is the mere dreaming of national pride, not deserving regard : but when I find mingled with the story the assertion that Bernardo gained the alliance of some of the Moors, and that, in after parts of his life, he fought also under Moorish banners, I accept these circumstances as valuable, and consider them as indications of general principles and manners, whoever may be the hero of the tale.

Charle-
magne's
expedition
into Spain.

Of the far-famed expedition of Charlemagne into Spain, little or nothing is known, though some French writers have defined the extent of his dominion in that country with the precision with which the political changes of modern times can be traced. Tradition, song, and history, unite in proving that he went into Catalonia and Arragon ; but it does not seem that he established any government in those countries ; and his march was rather the wild adventure of a knight than the grave purpose of kingly ambition. The Spaniards, as we have seen, claim the honour of defeating him in the valley of

Ronscesvalles; but the Arabs also assert their title to the same feat of chivalry: and, still further to embarrass the matter, it has been contended, with equal plausibility, that the French under Charlemagne were worsted by the Navarrese and people of Aquitaine; and thus that the French of the Adour and the Garonne defeated the French of the Seine. The land between the Ebro and the Pyrenees, and called the Spanish March, was governed, some centuries before the twelfth, by the counts of Barcelona, who owned the feudal sovereignty of the kings of France. This territorial acquisition has been generally referred to the sword of Charlemagne, not, however, on sound historical proof, but rather from the practice of monkish chroniclers, of honouring that emperor with all the deeds of arms which could not accurately be ascribed to any other warrior.

In the life of Count Fernan Gonsalez fiction and fact are blended beyond all power of extrication; and we must descend to the eleventh century for a genuine picture of the Spanish cavalier. No one is dearer to the proud recollections of a Spaniard than the Cid Rodrigo Diaz de Bivar: for it was by the valour of his arms that the momentous question of superiority between the two great powers in the Peninsula was decided as every Christian and Spanish heart could

The life of
the Cid.

CHAP. V. have wished. The honour of his chivalry is bright and pure ; for to swear by his knight-hood, *affé de Rodrigo*, is still the most solemn form of a Spaniard's asseveration.

The marriage of Don Diego Laynez, a Castilian gentleman, and Donna Teresa Rodriguez, daughter of a count and governor of Asturias, was followed in the year 1026 by the birth of a son at Burgos, who was called Rodrigo Diaz, and of Bivar, from the conquest made by his father of a town two leagues north of Burgos ; but he was more generally designated as the Cid, from the Asiatic title, *Es Sayd*, (my Lord,) which five Moorish emirs whom he conquered gave him, and which his king confirmed. * Indeed, from the number of his victories over the Moors, he emphatically merited this title.

While yet a youth he gave an earnest of his martial and ferocious disposition. His father had been insulted by a blow from Count Don Gomez, Lord of Gormaz, but he was unable, from old age and infirmities, to take vengeance, and he mourned in solitude and dishonour. Rodrigo, in order to restore peace to his father's mind, defied and fought the mighty man of arms : he slew him, and returned to his home with the head of the vanquished hanging at his saddle-bow. His father was seated at table

His early
ferocious
heroism.

* Chronicle, i. 20.

with dinner, untasted, before him. Rodrigo presented to him the head, which he called the herb that would restore his father's appetite. The old man embraced his son, and, placing him at the head of his table, declared that he alone was worthy of being at the head of the house of Layn Calvo. His father soon afterwards died. Rodrigo next distinguished himself by beating back an invasion of five Moorish emirs who had fearfully ravaged the country; and instead of treating them with severity, he gave them liberty, receiving their submission and tribute. *

The Cid's affair with Gomez was productive of an interesting circumstance, and illustrative of the manners of that remote and singular period. Ximena, the daughter of the Count, required of Don Ferdinand, King of Castile, the strange boon of Rodrigo of Bivar in marriage, alleging as her reason that his possessions would one day be greater than those of any man in the Castilian dominions. She declared that the power of pardon rested in her breast; and, like other amatory enthusiasts, she gave a colouring of religion to her wishes, by urging that the marriage would be for the service of God. The King consented, and summoned the Cid to his court; who, on receiving the message, incon-

His singular marriage.

* Chronicle, i. 1.

CHAP. V. timently dighted himself full gallantly, and, accompanied by many knights and other armed peers in festival guise, he repaired to the King at Valentia. Ferdinand received him with so much honour as to excite the envy of the courtiers. The purpose of the summons was communicated, and Rodrigo had no difficulty in consenting to marry the lady whose father he had killed. The marriage was celebrated; and the satisfaction of the King is peculiarly marked, for he made him large grants of land, being aware of his military prowess, and thinking that by this marriage he had secured his allegiance. * The Cid took his bride home, and, commending her to the kindest care of his mother, he went towards the Moorish frontier; for, in order to give a zest to his marital pleasures, he had vowed not to solace himself with Ximena's love till he had won five battles in the field.

* The circumstances about this marriage are so contradictory to modern usages, that the whole story has been regarded as a fable. Abundant evidence, however, of the marriage exists; and as that competent judge of Spanish manners, Mr. Southey, observes, "The circumstances of the marriage are not to be disbelieved for their singularity: had such circumstances appeared incredible or repugnant to common feeling, they would not have been invented; — whether they be true or false, they are equally characteristic of the state of manners."

He was soon called to be the champion of his king ; for a quarrel between Don Ferdinand and his brother Don Ramirio, King of Arragon, regarding the city of Caldhorra, was to be decided by arms. The Cid and the other champion, Don Martin Gonzales, entered the lists, and the judges placed them in such situations that the sun and wind favoured neither. They careered so fiercely against each other that their lances broke, but in the closer encounter of swords the Cid prevailed : he slew his adversary ; and the judges declared that the city of Caldhorra belonged to Don Ferdinand.

CHAP. V.

Enters the
service of
King Ferdi-
nand.

This victory was rewarded by the gratitude of the King, and the envy of the courtiers ; and the latter, in the bitterness of their rage, endeavoured to plot with the Moorish emirs, the subjects of the Cid, for his destruction. But the Moors not only disdained the alliance, but revealed the meditated treason to their lord. Many of the conspirators were banished ; but regarding one person the chivalric gallantry of the conqueror prevailed over his just resentment. The wife of the Count Don Garcia prayed for the pardon of her lord : she fell at the knees of the Cid, but he would not listen to her until she rose. She requested him to command the Moorish emir, into whose country she and her husband were sentenced to be banished, to treat them with mildness

The Cid's
chivalric
gallantry.

CHAP. V. and benevolence. The Cid spoke according to her will ; and the King of Cordova, for the love he bore that hero, treated them kindly, and gave Cabra to Garcia as a habitation. As far as Garcia was concerned this kindness was misplaced ; for he made war upon his benefactor, the King of Cordova, till the Cid went and punished him. The circumstances attending this punishment will be told in a subsequent and very interesting part of our hero's life.

The Cid then assisted his sovereign in wresting Visau, Lamego, and other cities from the Moors. There were no circumstances of his valour so remarkable as the cruel vengeance of Ferdinand on a man taken at Visau, who had slain King Don Alfonso, his wife's father. He cut off the foot which had prest down the armatost, or instrument by means of which the cross-bow was charged, he lopt off the hands which had held the bow and fitted the quarrel, and plucked out the eyes which had taken the mark. The archers then made a butt of the living trunk.* Thus, whatever might have been the influence of chivalry on the mind of the Cid, it certainly had not tempered the ferocity of his Gothic sovereign.

* Chronicle, i. 13.

Coimbra was one of the new conquests, and in that city Rodrigo was knighted. The ceremony was performed in the church of Saint Mary, which had once been the great mosque of Coimbra. The King girded on the sword and gave him the kiss, but not the blow, for the Cid needed no remembrancer of his duties. The ladies were his honourable attendants on this august occasion. The Queen gave him his horse, and the Infanta, Donna Urraca, fastened on his spurs. His names, Rodrigo Diaz, were now compressed into Ruydiez, agreeably to a frequent custom at investiture, which in so many respects was similar to baptism. By permission of the King he then exercised the privileges of his new rank by knighting nine noble squires. By this time the vow of the Cid was performed, and he retired awhile from the court to the society of his wife.

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 He is knighted.

Ferdinand soon afterwards died, having, contrary to the principles of the nation's constitution, divided his kingdom among his children. This breaking up the interests of the Gothic monarchy was most unwise; for the Goths were a fierce race, and in the cause of ambition brother had shed brother's blood. * The Cid went into the service of Don Sancho, King of

 Death of
King Fer-
dinand.

 The Cid be-
comes the
knight of

* Chronicle, ii. 1.

CHAP. V. Castile, the eldest son of the late sovereign ; and in all his wars, whether with Christians or Musulmans, he deported himself after his wonted manner : and his great feats of arms won so entirely the heart of the King that he made him his campeador, or officer whose duty it was to mark the place for the encampment of the host.

Sancho,
K ng of
Castile.

Mixture of
evil and
good in the
Cid's cha-
racter.

Sancho expressed his purpose of possessing himself of what he chose to consider his inheritance, — the whole kingdom of his late father. His iniquitous design was manfully opposed by one of his counsellors, who nobly declared that there was not a man in the world who would advise him to break the command of his father, and the vow which he had made to him. Sancho then turned to the Cid, stating to him, singularly enough, that he solicited his advice, for his father had charged him upon pain of his curse not to act without his judgment. The Cid replied, that it would ill behove him to counsel his sovereign to contradict the will of the late King. Sancho rejoined, with admirable casuistry, that he did not think he was breaking his oath to his father, for he had always denied the justice of the partition, and the oath alluded to had been forcibly extorted. The Cid found the King was resolute in his purpose ; and in the conflict of duties which the circumstances gave rise to,

Supports
the King
in his in-
justice.

his martial spirit overcame his virtue, and he CHAP. V.
determined to continue his soldier.

He prevailed upon Sancho, however, not to pass into the territory of Don Garcia, his brother, King of Gallicia, unless he obtained the love and licence of his brother, Don Alfonso, King of Leon. Numerous battles were fought, without, however, wearing any chivalric feature, and therefore not within my purpose to describe. In all of them the green pennon of the Cid floated conspicuously and triumphantly; and his achievements were so far beyond mortal comparison, that he was called the fortunate Cid — he of good fortune — he that was born in a happy hour. On one occasion Sancho was taken prisoner, but he was rescued by the Cid; and the circumstances are illustrative of the romantic character of the age. Thirteen knights were bearing the King away, when the Cid alone and lanceless, for he had shivered his weapon in the battle, galloped after them. He cried to them, “Knights, give me my Lord, and I will restore yours to you.” They scornfully bade him avoid contending with them, or they would make him prisoner too. “Give me but a lance, and, single as I am, I will rescue my Lord from all of ye,” was the heroic rejoinder of the Cid; adding, with increased energy and confidence, “By God’s help, I will do it.” The chivalric request

The Cid’s
romantic
heroism.

CHAP. V. could not be denied by cavaliers, and they gave him a lance. But such was the spirit and force with which he attacked them, that he slew eleven of the thirteen : on the two survivors he had mercy ; and thus he rescued his King. *

Sancho's
further in-
justice op-
posed by
the Cid.

Don Sancho became king both of Gallicia and Leon, confining his brother Garcia in irons as if he had been a traitor, and compelling Alfonso to seek for brotherly affection among the Moors. He robbed also his sister, Donna Elvira. Still his ambition was not satisfied ; the little town of Zamora, belonging to his sister, Donna Urraca, was wanting to fill the measure of his desires. He dispatched the Cid to her on the painful office of requiring Zamora for a price or in exchange, and of communicating the King's purpose of seizing it by force in case she did not accede to his wishes. The great men of Zamora dissuaded the Infanta from surrendering the place : their courageous spirits declared that they would rather eat their mules and their horses, yea, their very wives and children ; and the danger of yielding was shadowed out to her in that dark proverbial manner in which the Spaniards often conveyed their wisdom. " He who besieges you on the rock," they said, " will soon drive you from the plain."

* Chronicle, ii. 17.

The Cid returned to the King with the answer which this counsel dictated. Sancho, in his anger at the failure of the embassy, reproached his campeador with unskilful management of his task ; for his conscience told him that he who, like the Cid, had been bred up in the same house with Urraca, must have felt some compunctions at requiring her to give up the right of her inheritance. The campeador did not defend himself by stating that he had discharged his duty as an advocate for the King's purposes ; he only declared that he had discharged faithfully his bidding as a true vassal ; but he added, that he would not bear arms against the Infanta, nor against Zamora, because of the days that were past. *

Incensed at this opposition to his authority, Sancho banished his faithful campeador, who joined King Alfonso in the Moorish territories, with twelve hundred horse and foot, knights and squires, all men of approved worship. Alarmed at this defection of his bravest cavaliers, the counsellors of Sancho advised him to revoke his edict : it was revoked : the campeador returned, but he would not bear arms against the Infanta nor Zamora, because of the

* These last few words are judiciously placed in the Chronicle of the Cid by Mr. Southey. They are not contained in the ancient chronicles and ballads, but they are referred to by some, and implied in all.

CHAP. V. days that were past. The King attacked the town, and lost his life in the attempt. There were circumstances about his death that impeached both his brother Alfonso and his sister Urraca. The Castilians murmured their suspicions; but when Alfonso came to be crowned, the Cid was the only man of sufficient virtue and spirit to decline doing homage. Much astonishment was expressed in the countenances of the courtiers and prelates, who had already kissed the hands of Alfonso; and when he was called on by the sovereign-elect to perform his acknowledgment, he boldly declared that all who were then present suspected that by his counsel the King, Don Sancho, had come by his death, "and therefore I say," he continued, "unless you clear yourself of this, as by right you should do, I will never kiss your hand, nor receive you for my lord."

Death of
Sancho.

Instance of
the Cid's
virtuous
boldness.

The King expressed his pleasure at these sentiments, and swore to God and to St. Mary that he never slew his brother nor took counsel for his death; neither did his death please him, though Sancho had taken his kingdom from him. Alfonso then desired his courtiers to describe the means by which he might clear himself. They replied, that he and twelve of his knights, as his compurgators, must take that oath in the church of St. Gadra, at Burgos. Accordingly, the King

and his knights repaired to Burgos, in whose church of St. Gadra mass was celebrated before the royal family, the nobility, and the people. The King then took a conspicuous station near the altar. The Cid left his place, and, opening the Gospels, he laid the book upon the altar. The King placed his hand upon the volume; and the Cid said to him, with a seriousness of manner approaching to sternness, while the people attended with the intensest curiosity, "King Don Alfonso, you appear in this place to swear on the subject of your brother's death. You swear that you neither slew him, nor took counsel for his death: say now, you and these hidalgos, your friends and compurgators, if ye swear this?" And the King and his knights answered, "Yea, we swear it." The Cid continued, "If you knew of this matter, or commanded that it should be performed, may your fate be similar to that of your brother. May you die by the hand of a villain, in whom you trust; one who is not a hidalgo; one who is not a Castilian, but a foreigner." The King and his knights cried, "Amen." But Alfonso's colour faded; and the Cid, marking this sign of guilt, repeated the oath to him. The King assented, but again his countenance paled. A third time did the Cid press him, for the laws of Castile allowed this reiteration; and once more did the King's lan-

CHAP. V. guage and countenance contradict each other. But the compurgation was now completed, and the Cid was compelled to do homage.*

Character
of Alfonso,
successor of
Sancho.

Alfonso is a very interesting character among the kings and knights of Spain. Whatever participation he might have had in his brother's death, such foul conduct did not sully his general dealings. Justice was so admirably administered in Castile, that the people expressed their joy in the beautiful sentence,—that if a woman were to travel alone through his dominions, bearing gold and silver in her hand, no one would interrupt her path, whether in the desert or the peopled country. He was the friend of the distressed, the supporter of the weak, the strength of the nation. In his conduct to Alimayon, the Moorish King of Toledo, we may find displayed in a very interesting manner the frank dealing, the ingenuousness, the noble confidence, the honour of a cavalier, beautifully coloured with romantic thought. Alfonso was allied with Alimayon, that mighty sovereign of the Moors ; but the treaty, instead of being the free union of two equal and independent authorities, had been extorted from Alfonso, when the chance of war had thrown him into Alimayon's power. It was, of course, obligatory on the honour and

Story of his
chivalric
bearing.

* Chronicle, iii. 10, 11.

faith of Alfonso; and though he respected his ally, his chivalric pride whispered the wish that his friendship had been obtained by some other mode. In the second year of his reign, Alfonso marched towards Toledo, hearing that the territories of Alimayon had been invaded by the King of Cordova. He made no proclamation of his purpose, and Alimayon, not assured of his motives, sent messengers to him, reminding him of their alliance. The King detained the messengers. He then pursued his course to Olias; and the King of Cordova, divining his purpose, broke up his encampment before Toledo, and fled. Alfonso left his army at Olias, and, accompanied only by five knights and Alimayon's messengers, he rode to Toledo. He was met and greeted by his brother-sovereign, who kissed his shoulder, and thanked him for his truth in coming to his deliverance, and for remembering their mutual oath. The Moorish people expressed by their songs and atabals the love which the Christians bore their lord; but the Castilians severely blamed Alfonso for his implicit faith in the honour of a Moor. Alimayon returned with Alfonso next day to the Christian camp. An entertainment, worthy of the splendour of chivalry, was furnished forth: but while the kings were at table Alimayon was astonished at seeing some armed knights gradually surrounding the tent. His

CHAP. V. brother-sovereign bade him suspend his curiosity till the conclusion of the feast: the Moor did so; and Alfonso then reminded him that their alliance had been formed when he was in his power at Toledo, but now, as Alimayon was in his power, he required an exoneration of that oath and covenant. Alimayon could not but comply; and agreeably to the form, both Moorish and Christian, acquitted him of his promise, in expressions thrice repeated. Alfonso then called for the book of the Gospels, and said to him, "Now that you are in my power, I swear and promise to you, never to fight against you nor against your son, but to aid you against all the world. The oath which I formerly made was forced from me, and therefore not obligatory on my conscience and conduct: but I cannot violate the present oath, for I make it now that you are in my hands, and I can treat you as I please." The alliance was then settled on a firmer basis than ever; and Alfonso, after making the King of Cordova feel the might of his power, took his course to Castile.*

The Cid's
second marriage.

Return we now to our Cid. His wife Ximena was dead; and Alfonso, in order to attach him to his person, married him to his own niece, also a Ximena. The marriage was celebrated on the

* Chronicle, iii. 13—16.

19th of July, in the year 1074. For some years CHAP. V.
 the achievements of the Cid were confined to the duties which were imposed on him as King's champion. Questions of territory between Alfonso and the Moors were generally decided by single combat, and the Cid was always victorious. These circumstances should have cemented the friendship of the King and his campeador: but the courtiers, by their well-weaved plots, succeeded in driving into banishment their most formidable rival in the affections of the sovereign. The Cid took refuge with the Moorish King of Saragossa, and continued in that part of Spain for some years the subject and soldier of the Moors, fighting their battles against the Christians; but always showing mercy to the vanquished. Mercy, indeed, to those whom he conquered in the field was a prevailing feature of his character, which he displayed without regard to religious peculiarities: for in his previous battles in the cause of Alfonso he had often released his prisoners unransomed.

Is banished
from Al-
fonso's
court.

Becomes
the ally of
the Moors;

The Moors from Africa invaded Spain. In the extremity of his distress, Alfonso recalled the Cid, who soon drove back the enemy. For a considerable time that leader enjoyed the gratitude of his sovereign, and was the soul of the Christian army; and then circumstances arose which his enemies ingeniously perverted

but re-
called.

CHAP. V. to his injury. Alfonso was gone into Andalusia against the Moors, unaccompanied by the Cid, whom sickness detained at home. He recovered, however, in time to meet and repel a Moorish invasion on the other side; and he retaliated on them as far as Toledo, whose king complained to Alfonso of the campeador's violation of the oath and covenant between them. Alfonso was astonished and displeased; and suffering his mind to be influenced by the suggestions of the Ricos-omes, all his hatred of the Cid returned in its pristine force. He saw nothing in him now but the avenger of Don Sancho's death. He summoned him to Burgos; but the Cid replied he would meet him between that town and Bivar. They accordingly met, and the campeador would have kissed his hand in homage; but the King repulsed him, angrily saying, "Ruydiez, quit my land." The Cid instantly pricked his mule to another piece of ground, and replied, "I am now, Sir, upon my own land, and not upon yours." The King then commanded him to depart from his states forthwith, not even allowing him thirty days' time, the usual licence of the hidalgos.

Is banished
again.

The moment of his banishment was not an unhappy one, for it was then that he discovered his strength; many knights and other valiant men-of-arms resolving, with his cousin-german, Alvar Fañez, to accompany him through desert

and peopled country, and spend their wealth, and garments, and horses in his service. But the joyous exultation of this consciousness of power was soon checked by the grief of quitting his own home;—the deserted hall, the perches without hawks upon them, the porch without its seats, no cloaks hanging down the walls:—all these signs of desolation brought tears into his eyes, and he exclaimed, “My enemies have done this:” but soon recovering his Christian resignation, he cried, “God be praised for all things.” He passed through Burgos, where the people could not receive him, for the King had prohibited them to do so; and he whose sword had been girt on in a happy hour, was condemned to pitch his tents upon the sands.

The chivalric history of the Cid is now varied by a circumstance which has not its parallel in the life of any other cavalier on record. He was deeply distressed for present money, and he obtained some by means not recommended in any code of knighthood. He filled two chests with sand, and persuaded two Jews, who had confidence in his honour, that their contents were gold. He had been accustomed to sell to these men his Moorish spoils, and he demanded on the present security the sum of six hundred marks. The money was delivered. The negotiation was conducted on the part of the Cid by

Singular
story of the
Cid's un-
knightly
meanness.

CHAP. V. his friend, Martin Antolinez, who received a handsome present from the Jews ; but the Cid, the noble-minded lofty cavalier, was the author of this unknightly piece of craft ; and he consoled his conscience by the reflection that he acted more from necessity than inclination, and that in time he would redeem all. In order to avoid detection, he made the Jews promise not to open the chests for a year, but to retain them only as a security.

One little trait of the Cid's coolness and cunning must be noticed. The Jews, in their joy at the excellence of the bargain, were disposed to generosity, and offered the Cid a red skin, Moorish and honourable. The Cid accepted it, telling his friends he would consider it as a gift if they had bought it ; otherwise, they should add its value to the loan. *

Fortunes of
the Cid
during his
exile.

The Cid then went to Cardina ; and, after bidding farewell to his wife and children, he quitted gentle Castile, and went into the Moorish territory. He battled with the Moors

* Chronicle, iii. 17—22. Müller, in his Dissertation on the Cid, speaks as positively that the money was repaid, as if the receipt in full for all demands, authenticated by the city of Burgos, were lying on his table. There is no evidence of the repayment in the ancient writers ; and when we consider that the Jews were always treated in Spain far worse than the Musulmans, we cannot conclude that the Cid would consider men whom he had cheated as entitled to justice.

and vanquished them, sparing, however, those who were the allies of Alfonso. In particular, he won a great victory over them in a sally which he made from the castle of Alcocer, wherein he was besieged by them. The Cid of Bivar was known by his green pennon and gilt saddle. He charged his standard-bearer, Pero Bermuez, not to venture forward before he commanded. The circumstances of the battle are described in the translation of the old poem of the Cid with astonishing spirit : —

“ The gates were then thrown open, and forth at once
they rush’d,

The out-posts of the Moorish host back to the camp
were push’d :

The camp was all in tumult ; and there was such a
thunder,

Of cymbals and of drums, as if earth would cleave, in
sunder.

There you might see the Moors arming themselves in
haste,

And the two main battles how they were forming fast,
Horsemen and footmen mixt, a countless troop, and vast.
The Moors are moving forward, the battle soon must
join.

‘ My men stand here in order, rang’d upon a line !
Let not a man move from his rank before I give the
sign.’

Pero Bermuez heard the word, but he could not refrain :
He held the banner in his hand, he gave his horse the
rein ;

CHAP. V. ‘ You see yon foremost squadron there, the thickest of
the foes,

Noble Cid, God be your aid, for there your banner
goes !

Let him that serves and honours it show the duty that
he owes.’

Earnestly the Cid call’d out, ‘ For heaven’s sake be
still !’

Bermuez cried, ‘ I cannot hold ;’ so eager was his will.
He spurr’d his horse, and drove him on amidst the
Moorish rout ;

They strove to win the banner, and compast him
about.

Had not his armour been so true, he had lost either life
or limb :

The Cid called out again, ‘ For heaven’s sake succour
him !’

Their shields before their breasts, forth at once they go ;

Their lances in the rest, levell’d fair and low ;

Their banners and their crests waving in a row ;

Their heads all stooping down towards the saddle-bow.

The Cid was in the midst, his shout was heard afar,

‘ I am Rui Diaz, the champion of Bivar :

Strike among them, gentlemen, for sweet mercy’s
sake.’

There where Bermuez fought amidst the foe, they
brake

Three hundred banner’d knights : it was a gallant show.

Three hundred Moors they kill’d — a man with every
blow :

When they wheel’d and turn’d, as many more lay slain,

You might see them raise their lances and level them
again.

There you might see the breast-plates, how they were CHAP. V.
 cleft in twain,
 And many a Moorish shield lie shatter'd on the plain;
 The pennons that were white, mark'd with a crimson
 stain;
 The horses running wild whose riders had been slain.
 The Christians call upon Saint James, the Moors upon
 Mahound.
 There were thirteen hundred of them slain on a little
 spot of ground." *

His victory over the Moors presented the Cid with a fair occasion of propitiating Alfonso. He accordingly dispatched Alvar Fañez into Castile with a gift to the King of thirty Moorish horses, which was accepted. Alfonso did not show present honour to the Cid, but he expressed his joy at the victory; and relieved from all penalties those who had joined him, and those who should be induced to follow his fortunes. † These were joyful news to the Cid and his host; and the faithful messenger brought also such tidings of their families, that, as men as well as Castilians, they were right joyful.

On every occasion the Cid showed a generous indifference to his own share of the spoil; and whatever country he left, both men and women

The Cid's
 chivalric
 nobleness
 and gene-
 rosity.

* I borrow from Mr. Frere's translation of part of the Cid.

† Chronicle, iv. 1—11.

CHAP. V. wept, and the prayers of the people went before him, so high was his reputation for acts of individual clemency. Once he invaded a Moorish territory with which Raymond Berenger, Count of Barcelona, was in alliance. The Count and his Frenchmen harnessed themselves in their gay attire, resolved to recover the spoil of the Cid. But he who was born in a happy hour smiled at the vain splendour of the French cavaliers; and while his men were placing their plain Gallician saddles on their horses, he assured them, that for one of their enemy whom they should slay, three would leap from their horses in terror. Berenger's force was defeated: he himself was taken prisoner; and of the spoil the most precious part was his good sword, Colada.

The subsequent circumstances will recall to the reader's mind the chivalric bearing of the Black Prince and Henry V. Berenger was conducted to the tent of his vanquisher, and a repast was set before them; but he refused all refreshment, though my Cid courteously invited him. The next day a very splendid entertainment was set forth; but the Count preserved his pride and sullenness, or only broke forth into expressions of contempt and self-reproach that he had been beaten by a set of ragged fellows. My Cid did not reply to this uncourtesy, but continued to urge him to partake of the repast,

and not lament the chance of war. But Berenger abandoned himself to unmanly despondency, and desired to be left alone to die. For three days he continued in this abject state; and he was only roused from it by the noble offer of the Cid to give liberty to him and any two of his knights. The Cid, however, was good humouredly resolved not to part from him, unless he partook of his hospitality. "If you do not eat heartily, Count, you and I shall not part yet." They then cemented their kindness and gratitude by good cheer, and the Count was permitted to take his leave: but as he rode away he frequently reverted his eyes to know if the Cid were pursuing him, for his own ignoble soul could not credit the generosity of his vanquisher. *

Increased admiration of the Cid's military talents, and the death by treachery of one of his bravest officers, induced Alfonso to wish for a reconciliation with his faithful campeador. It was effected; but not till the Cid had induced the King to stipulate that no hidalgo should be banished in future without a lawful hearing of his cause, and the old licence of thirty days. On another great matter he was also the friend of the public good; for he induced the King to consent to preserve the privileges of towns, and

Is recalled
by Alfonso.

* Chronicle, iv. 14—17.

CHAP. V. not to impose taxes on them contrary to their customs. Alfonso even conceded the liberty of armed resistance to his acts, if ever they should contradict his solemn engagements.

The Cid's happiness was soon alloyed by the death of his son Rodrigo ; a young man whose military spirit was so fine and gallant, that the Christians regarded him as the hope of Spain. The Cid was speedily called from private cares and sorrows to a more important undertaking than any he had been ever engaged in. He headed the Christian troops against Toledo ; and those troops embraced not only the flower of Spanish chivalry, but many knights from France, Italy, and Germany ; so important to the general fate of religion and arms was the capture of Toledo considered. We may lament, with many an admirer of Spanish chivalry, that the memory of their gallant deeds has not been handed down to us, and censure the ancient chroniclers for wronging such worthy knights. We only know that Toledo was captured by the Cid on the 25th of May, in the year 1085.

Among many subsequent military achievements of the campeador I shall select only his engagement with his old foe, Raymond Berenger, Count of Barcelona, who had hastily taken up arms to assist a Moorish prince, also an enemy of the Cid. If the Cid had dreaded numbers

The Cid
captures
Toledo,

he would have yielded : if he had regarded the established reputation of knights, he would have partaken of the general terror, for the French were esteemed the best knights in the world, and the best appointed ; and fame proceeded to ascribe to Berenger's the chivalric virtues of courage and skill in no ordinary degree. But the exhortations of the Cid and his very presence animated the troops to heroism ; and when the moment of battle, fixed by his own admirable skill, arrived, the event, as usual, proved that he had been born in a happy hour. Berenger and his chief officers fell into his hands : he showed them great courtesy ; and released them on their ransom, and their promise on their knighthood never to appear in arms against him again.*

The capture of Valentia was the next and most important circumstance in the Cid's career. The fame of his exploits had drawn to his standard a thousand knights of lineage, five hundred and fifty other horsemen, and of foot-soldiers a thousand. I shall not detail the events of the nine months' siege of Valentia ; for the picture does not vary in any of its colours and shades from the scenes of blood, and horror, and desolation, in other wars.

There is one circumstance, however, of a different character, and pleasingly illustrative of

and Valentia.

Story of Spanish manners.

* Chronicle, v. 17—20.

CHAP. V. ancient manners. Among the hosts of the Cid was an Asturian hidalgo, named Martin Paleaz, who was better known for his personal strength than his chivalric courage. The Cid resolved to shame him into bravery; and he seized as a fitting occasion a day when Martin had concealed himself while his brother-knights were tourneying with the Moors. When the dinner-hour arrived, Martin Paleaz, not suspecting that the Cid had discovered his baseness, washed his hands with the other knights, and would have taken his place at the common table; but the Cid grasped his hand, and telling him that neither of them was worthy to sit with such valorous knights as those who were now before them, he led him to his own high table where it was his general custom to sit, and dine alone; Alvar Fañez, Pero Bermuez, and knights of equal renown, sitting at other high tables; while the rest of the knights reclined upon estrados with tables before them. There was no equality of knighthood, therefore, among the cavaliers of Spain as in the Celtic nations. There was no Round Table, generously dispensing with the inequalities of rank. It was a subject of honourable ambition with the knights of the Cid to be pronounced worthy of sitting at the table with Alvar Fañez and his companions; and the simple

Martin Paleaz plumed himself on his superior honours. CHAP. V.

The next day the Christian knights held a joust to the utterance with the Moors; and the Cid was pleased by observing that Martin Paleaz was so much elated that he did not, as usual, quit the field when the lances met in rude shock. The Cid, on returning to his lodging, not only placed his gallant friend by his side, but invited him to eat out of his own dish; adding, that he had deserved better that day than yesterday. This expression revealed the whole matter to Paleaz: he now saw that the Cid had discovered all the artifices of his cowardice, and that he had placed him by his side at table to disgrace, and not to honour him; thinking that such a recreant was not fit to sit with other knights. These reflections of shame kindled in him a spark of courage; and he now resolved to deport himself like a gallant cavalier. In several subsequent battles with the Moors he fought so bravely that they marvelled, and enquired whence that devil had come. The Cid rewarded him with his friendship, and also the distinction of sitting at the table with Alvar Fañez and other true knights. *

* Chronicle, vi. 29. The old Spanish writers observe that the Cid knew how to make a good knight, as a good groom knows how to make a good horse.

CHAP. V.

The Cid's
unjust con-
duct to the
Moors.

The Cid became lord of Valencia, reserving, however, the feudal and absolute sovereignty to King Alfonso. He made many arrangements with the Moors, to the credit of his ingenuity, rather than of his honour; for he violated them all as soon as his purposes were accomplished. Finally, he permitted the conquered to live in the adjoining town and suburb of Alcudia; to have their own law administered by their own cadis and alguazils; to enjoy two mosques, one in the city, and the other in the suburb, the Moors paying to the Cid a tenth part of their produce, as the price of his concessions. The campeador was a banished man from gentle Castile, when he took Valencia, the malignity of his enemies having again wrought upon the jealous temper of Alfonso: but his victories once more reconciled him to the King, who accepted from him a noble present of horses, saddled and bridled, each with a bright sword hanging from the saddle-bow. His wife and daughters now joined him at Valencia; and it is curious to notice, as a point in his character, that his first expression of joy was to run a career on his good horse Baviaca, who performed his exercises so beautifully, that the people marvelled, and he became famous over all Spain.

The unchi-
valric cha-
racter of the
Cid's wife
and daugh-
ters.

The Cid mistook the character of his wife and daughters; for he thought that the martial spirit of chivalry animated them as well as himself:

howbeit, in truth, they were attached to the gentler duties of life. A Moorish host came from Africa to contest with him his right to Valencia; and, in order to entertain Ximena and her damsels, he placed them in a lofty tower, whence they might view, without danger, the bloody strife. But, unlike the women in other chivalric countries, they turned pale, and trembled at the scene; and the Cid removed them, though their presence was important; for the courage of his troops was animated to fury when they thought that ladies were witnessing their feats of arms.*

New presents were made to Alfonso of the spoils taken on this occasion; and the King and his campeador were formally and publicly reconciled. The Cid humbled himself with oriental prostrations; for many parts of Moorish manners were copied by the Spaniards. They had not met for some years; and time had laid his wrinkling hand on the brow of the Cid. But Alfonso was more particularly struck with the appearance of his beard, which had grown to a marvellous length.†

The Cid
recalled by
Alfonso.

* Chronicle, vii. 19. Ximena was like the famous Oriana in Amadis of Gaul, who was always affrayed at military preparations.

† He had let it grow out of respect to Alfonso; and he intended it should be a matter of admiration both with Moors and Christians. Poema del Cid, v. 1230, &c.

CHAP. V.

The marriages of his daughters.

Basely treated by their husbands.

The Cid was now at a height of power never reached by any subject; and his wealth attracted the admiration of men of nobler birth. The Infantes of Carrion solicited the hands of his daughters: the alliance was favoured by the King; and the Cid and Ximena, though they liked not the character of the young nobles, yielded to his importunities, and the marriages were solemnized. These marriages were an abundant source of infelicity; and he whose good fortune had generally warranted his popular title, — he that was born in a happy hour, — repented of having yielded to the King's suggestions. The Infantes were men of base and cowardly minds, and totally unable to maintain a noble port in the house of the Cid, where courage and martial exercises gave the tone to manners. Mortified personal pride took refuge in the pride of birth; and the Infantes chose to imagine that they had sullied their nobility by allying themselves with the family of the Cid: but they did not consider that they had violated the chivalry of their rank when they insulted; and even beat their wives, leaving them in a wood, apparently dead. The ladies were found by a relation, and the Cid became acquainted with the story. He appealed to the King, who appointed a cortez at Toledo, to judge the matter; and weighty indeed must it have been thought, for

the present was but the third cortez which had been held during the reign of Alfonso. CHAP. V.

To Toledo, accordingly, all parties repaired. The Cid had with him the best and bravest knights, a gallant array, whose tents on the hills round the city were so numerous that the Cid's attendants seemed like a host, rather than a common guard of honour. The hall of the palace of Galiana, the place of assemblage of the cortez, had its walls hung with cloths of gold, and estrados, with carpets, were placed on the ground. At the upper end was the King's chair, the ancient seat of the kings of Toledo; and round it were rich and noble estrados for the chief lords of the cortez. Near the chair of the King the Cid caused, the day before the meeting, an ivory seat to be placed, which he had won in Valencia, it having belonged to the kings of that city. A number of his esquires, with their swords hanging from their necks, guarded the seat, till their lord should come and take possession of it.

Cortez at Toledo to decide the cause.

The next morning the King, after hearing mass, repaired to the palace of Galiana, with the Infantes of Carrion, and the counts and ricos-omes of the cortez. The ivory seat excited the envy of Count Garcia, the ancient rival of the Cid; and the chief esquire was ready by arms to repel his sneers and sarcasms, till the

Picture of ancient manners.

CHAP. V. King prevented the progress of the contest, by declaring that his campeador had won the seat right honourably ; that never had any vassal sent to his lord such gifts as he had done ; and that if any one were envious, let him achieve equal feats of honour, and the King would seat him next the throne.

The Cid now entered the hall, accompanied by a hundred of his choicest knights. They were apparelled both for courtesy and war. To the eye of the court their garments were only fine skins of ermine, and the usual cloak of the nation ; but underneath they wore hauberks of well-tempered mail, and swords sweet and sharp in the edge. The dress of the campeador himself would have surprised Raymond Berenger, Count of Barcelona, and his mocking Frenchmen. His hose was of fine cloth, his shoes were richly worked : his body was clad in the finest linen, and a red skin, all curiously worked with gold and silver. His coif was of scarlet and gold ; but the beard, of which he was so conscious, was bound by a cord, in sign of mourning and woe.

Most of the assembly rose to greet him ; and the King offered him a share of his own seat. But the Cid replied, that it would better become him to be at his feet, for he owed his fame and fortune to the goodness of the King and his

brother and father; and it was not fit for him that received bounty to sit with him who dispensed it. The King then commanded him to place himself on the ivory seat, for that he had won it like a good man. This he did, and the hundred knights surrounded their lord. CHAP. V.

The purpose of the cortez was declared by the King, and two noble counts were sworn alcaldes, to judge rightly and truly between the campeador and the Infantes of Carrion, according to the law of Castile and Leon. The Cid then demanded that his two good swords, Colada and Tizona, should be restored to him. He had given them into the keeping of the Infantes of Carrion, that they might honour his daughters with them, and serve their king. But when they left his daughters in the oak-forest of Corpes, they renounced his love, and as they were no longer his sons-in-law, they ought to render him back the swords. The alcaldes deliberated upon this demand, and decreed that the swords should be restored. The Infantes delivered them to the King, pleased with the moderation of the Cid's demand. Alfonso drew the swords, and the whole court shone with their brightness. Their hilts were made of solid gold, and all the knights present marvelled. The Cid received them from the King; and, smiling, even from the strongest of his heart's affections, he laid them upon his knees,

CHAP. V. and called them the best swords in Spain, and grieved that the Infantes of Carrion had kept them hungry, and had not fed them with flesh as they had been wont to be fed with. He delivered them to the care of Alvar Fañez, and Pero Bermuez, who solicited the honourable charge.

The Cid then demanded a restoration of the treasure which he had given to the Infantes on occasion of his daughters' marriages. This demand was faintly resisted by the argument, that it had been spent in the King's service. The Cid judiciously took advantage of the admission, that the treasure had been received, and then fairly enough contended that it touched not him, if the Infantes had expended money for the King; and so Alfonso himself judged the matter; and the alcaldes decreed the restitution of the treasure.

To carry this ordinance into effect the court was adjourned; and when it re-assembled the Cid rose from his ivory seat, and recapitulating the circumstances of the marriages, and not sparing the King for his share in them, he demanded of the Infantes the reasons of their conduct: he declared he would not let them depart without mortal defiance. He added, laying his hand upon his beard, (his usual sign of wrath,) that if the King and the cortez would not right him he

would do justice to himself; he would follow them to Carrion; he would take them by the throat, and carry them prisoners to his daughters at Valencia, where they should do penance for their offences, and be fed with the food which they deserved. CHAP. V.

The King mildly remarked, that in promoting the marriages he had acted according to the request of the Infantes themselves, and he saw that much of the dishonour touched himself. To the storm of passion with which the Cid had concluded his address, the King firmly replied that the cause was before the cortez, and that the alcaldes would pass a righteous sentence.

The Cid recovered his serenity, and kissing the King's hand, returned to his ivory seat.

After a brief pause he rose, and thanking the King for his compassion for his and his daughters' dishonour, he defied the Infantes to mortal combat.

The King called upon them to reply; and they boldly excused their leaving their wives: for the daughters of Ruy Diaz of Bivar were not worthy of alliance with men who were the best hidalgos in all Castile. Regarding the acts of personal cruelty and unchivalric deportment, they said nothing. They denied the necessity of doing battle upon such a matter with any one. Count Don Garcia then began to lead the Infantes from

CHAP. V. the court, and exclaimed, as he passed the Cid,
— “Let us leave him, sitting like a bridegroom in his ivory chair, and thinking that his beard will frighten us.”

The campeador stroked his chin, and sternly demanded what the Count had to do with his beard. “Thanks be to God,” he added, “never son of woman hath taken me by it; never son of Moor or of Christian hath plucked it as I did yours in your castle of Cabra, Count, when I took your castle of Cabra, and took you by the beard: there was not a boy of the host who did not pull it.” — “The hair which I plucked has not, methinks, grown again,” he added with a look of bitterest scorn.

To this cruel sarcasm Garcia could only answer by the low scurrility of desiring the Cid to go back to his own country, and take toll for his mills as he used to do.

This insult was scarcely to be tolerated. The knights of the Cid grasped their swords, and looked at each other with fierce countenances; but their respect for the command of their lord not to act till he bade them, kept them silent. The Cid himself forgot his own injunctions, and reproached his former standard-bearer, Pero Bermuez, for not taking up his cause. That valiant knight, dashing aside some personal insults with which the Cid had mingled his censure,

folded his cloak round his arm, and fiercely striding to the Count Garcia, felled him to the ground. CHAP. V.

Immediately the court was a scene of wild uproar ; swords were drawn, and no respect for the presence of the King could quell the fray. At length the passions exhausted themselves, and the court resumed its sittings. Alfonso declared that he would defend the rights of all parties, and advised Garcia and his friends to support their cause by courtesy and reason, and not to revile the Cid. The cause was proceeded with ; and the King with the *alcaldes* finally decreed that the Infantes, and their uncle Count Suero Gonzales, who had abetted them in their dishonour to the ladies, should do battle with three of the Cid's people, and acquit themselves if it were in their power.

The battle accordingly was fought, and the champions of the Cid were victors, agreeably to the decision of the twelve true men appointed as judges, and the consenting voice of the King and people. The Infantes of Carrion and their uncle were declared traitors. The family itself sunk into disgrace ; a worthy punishment, as the Spanish writers declare, of them who dishonour and desert fair lady.*

* Chronicle, books 9 and 10. Every reader of Spanish history knows how fiercely the story of the Infantes has been discussed. I shall not burden my pages with a state-

CHAP. V. — These circumstances were considered of equal force with a canonical dissolution of marriage ; and the daughters of the Cid were shortly afterwards united to the Infantes of Navarre and Arragon, men of far more power and rank than their former lords. Valencia witnessed the present, as it had the former nuptials. Bull-fights, throwing at the target, and throwing the cane, were some of the amusements of the Christians, and the joculars were right nobly rewarded. The Moors, also, were animated and sincere in their rejoicings ; and the spectators were pleasingly distracted between the Christian and the Moorish games. For eight days the rejoicings lasted : each day the people were feasted, and each day they all ate out of silver.

Death of
the Cid.

These were the last circumstances of importance in the life of the Cid. Five years afterwards, on the 29th of May, 1099, he died at

ment of the arguments, but I think that the balance is very much in favour of the truth of the story. Mr. Southey's remark is judicious. "The conduct of the Infantes of Carrion is certainly improbable. There are instances enough of such cruelty, but none of such folly. Yet nothing can be so improbable as that such a story should be invented and related so soon after their death ; of persons who had really existed, and were of such rank : and that it should be accredited and repeated by all the historians who lived nearest the time."

Valencia. Romance writers have endeavoured to adorn his closing scene; but I cannot select from their works any thing that is either beautiful or probable. CHAP. V.

In one of those historical works which have done honour to the literature of our age, much praise is bestowed upon the Cid, Ruy Diaz, for his frankness, honour, and magnanimity. * But, in truth, to very little of this commendation is our hero's fame entitled. His conduct to the poor Jews of Burgos will not be urged as a proof of his free and noble dealing, of that frank sincerity which interests us in contemplating the worthies of chivalric times; and as for his honour, that sacred possession of a knight, he pledged it often to the Moors of Valencia, and violated it to gratify his objects as a conqueror. Look at him in the cortez: observe his coolness, his deliberation, his gradual statement of his demands. Here was the calculating man of vengeance, not the gay, the wild cavalier throwing down his gauntlet, and displaying his whole soul in one burst of generous passion. There is a sternness about the Cid which repels our gaze. His mind was not enriched by Arabic learning, and grateful to his teachers; nor was it softened by recollections of Arabian loves: and when I

His character.

* Hallam's Middle Ages, iii. 482. 2d edit.

CHAP. V. see him pitying his sword that it had not received the food it deserved, I can scarcely allow him a station among the heroes of chivalry, those brilliant spirits ; for I recognise nothing but the barbarism of the Goth, infuriated by the vengeful spirit of the Moor. Let the Cid, however, have his due praise. Several instances of his generosity to prisoners have been given. His treatment of the Moors of Valencia, after he had once settled the government, was noble. He suffered no difference of religion to affect his paternal regards to his people ; and thence it happened that Moors and Christians dwelt together under his mild sway with such accord that the union seemed the long result of ages. One of those Moors gave him the following praise, with which I shall conclude my remarks on his character: "The Cid, Ruy Diaz," said he, was the man in the world who had the bravest heart, and he was the best knight at arms, and the man who best maintained his law ; and in the word which he hath promised he never fails ; and he is the man in the world who is the best friend to his friend, and to his enemy he is the mortalest foe among all Christians ; and to the vanquished he is full of mercy and compassion ; and full thoughtful and wise in whatever thing he doeth ; and his countenance is such that no

man seeth him for the first time without con- CHAP. V.
ceiving great fear.”

As a horse was part and parcel of a knight, I cannot take leave of the Cid without saying a few words regarding his steed Bavioca. After the death of his master no one was permitted to bestride that good horse. Gil Diaz, a valiant knight, and companion of the Cid, took him in charge, feeding him and leading him to water with his own hand. Bavioca lived two years and a half after the death of his master the Cid ; and when he died Gil Diaz buried him before the gate of the monastery at Valencia, in the public place, and planted two elms upon the grave, the one at his head, and the other at his feet.

Fate of his
good horse.

I have already alluded to the mighty influence of the Cid on the political history of Spain, —his decision of the great question of Christian or Mohammedan superiority. After his death the impulse which he had given to the Spanish power was kept alive; the Moors never recovered themselves from the prowess of his knighthood, and, finally, they were driven from the Peninsula. It was only when the general Christian cause was the weakest, that the Spanish government, and people, who were occasionally conquerors, extended the humanities of chivalry to the Moors. But when the Crescent waned, this mild aspect

Spanish chi-
valry after
his death.

CHAP. V. was changed; for revenge and all the baleful passions of victory swept away the gentle graces of the cavalier, and intolerance and cruelty rose with the increasing power of the Christians. Concessions of liberty of conscience were made to the Moors, but the treaties were broken, apparently, that mockery might embitter pain. The Moors and Christians did not deport themselves to each other with chivalric courtesy; and history gives no warrant to the romantic stories of any magnanimity or grandeur of soul illuminating the last years of the Arabs in Spain.* Among the Christians themselves, indeed, the chivalric character was sustained in all its vigour and gracefulness. Ecclesiastical history furnishes us with a very amusing instance of its influence. When Alphonso IX., about the year 1214, had expelled the Moors from Toledo, he endeavoured to establish the Roman missal in the place of St. Isidore's. But the people clung to their old ideas, and resisted the innovation. Those were not the days of theological argument; but the sword

The merits
of missals
decided by
battle.

* The world has generally been acquainted with the fall of Grenada by the work of Genes Perez de Hita, which was translated into French, and acquired popularity when Florian made it the foundation of his Gonsalvo de Cordova. There is very little historical truth in the volume, and the value of the pictures of manners it contains has been much overrated: those pictures, moreover, are Moorish rather than chivalric, and therefore not of service to the present work.

was the only means of deciding disputes and of CHAP. V.
determining truth. Each party chose a doughty knight, and commended to his chivalry the cause of a missal. The two champions met in the lists; the two parties ranged themselves in the surrounding galleries, and to the joy of the Spaniards the champion of St. Isidore was victorious. *

But the gallantry of the Spaniards is the most interesting subject of regard. James II., King of Arragon, decreed that every man, whether a knight or another, who should be in company with a noble lady, might pass safe and unmolested, unless he were guilty of murder. † In the minds of Spanish knights, religion and love were ever blended; and he who, thinking of his mistress, took for his motto the words, “Sin vos, y sin Dios y mi, (without thee, I am without God, and without myself,) was not thought guilty of impiety. In romantic gallantry the Spaniard was a very perfect knight. Garcia Perez de Vargas, who lived in the thirteenth century, was a splendid exemplar of Spanish chivalry. His valour excited the envy of men of nobler birth, who displayed the meanness of their spirit in questioning his title to bear arms. He once withstood the Moors, while those of

Gallantry
of a knight.

* Warton on the *Gesta Romanorum*, in the first volume of his *History of English Poetry*.

† De Marca, *Marca Hispanica*, p. 1428.

CHAP. V. more ancient heraldry quailed. When he had discomfited the foe, he returned to his host, and striking his battered shield, remarked to his envious rival, in a tone of justifiable sarcasm, "You are right in wishing to deprive me of my coat of arms, for I expose it to too great dangers. It would be far safer in your hands; for so prudent a knight as yourself would take very excellent care of it." * Garcia was such a doughty knight, that his very presence terrified the Moors. He and a companion were once suddenly met by a party of seven of their turbaned foes. His friend took flight, but Perez closed his vizor, and couched his lance. The Moors declined a battle. Perez reached the camp: his conduct met with its guerdon; but he had too much chivalric kindness warming his heart to answer the demand, who it was that had forsaken him in so perilous a moment. There was another circumstance in this affair which marks the gallantry of our knight. While his martial demeanour was keeping the Moors at bay he found that his scarf had fallen from his shoulder. He calmly turned his horse's head, recovered his mistress's favour, and then pursued his course to the

* Con razon (dize) nos quitais las armas del linage, pues las ponemos à tan graves peligros, y traucos: vos las mereçeis mejor, que como mas recatado, les teneis mejor guardados.

Mariana, Hist. de Espana, xiii. 7.

camp, the Moors being still afraid to attack him.* CHAP. V.

* Mariana, xiii. 7. This last story of Garcia Perez de Vargas is the subject of a beautiful ballad, which Mr. Lockhart has translated. The stanzas regarding the scarf are particularly pleasing.

“ He look’d around, and saw the scarf, for still the Moors
were near,
And they had pick’d it from the sward, and loop’d it on a
spear.

‘ These Moors,’ quoth Garci Perez, ‘ uncourteous Moors
they be —

Now, by my soul, the scarf they stole, yet durst not
question me !

“ ‘ Now reach once more my helmet.’ The esquire said him
nay,

‘ For a silken string why should you fling, perchance, your
life away ?’

— ‘ I had it from my lady,’ quoth Garci, ‘ long ago,
And never Moor that scarf, be sure, in proud Seville shall
show.’ —

“ But when the Moslems saw him, they stood in firm array :
— He rode among their armed throng, he rode right furiously.

— ‘ Stand, stand, ye thieves and robbers, lay down my
lady’s pledge,’

He cried, and ever as he cried, they felt his faulchion’s edge.

“ That day when the lord of Vargas came to the camp alone,
The scarf, his lady’s largess, around his breast was thrown :
Bare was his head, his sword was red, and from his pom-
mel strung

Seven turbans green, sore hack’d I ween, before Garci Perez
hung.”

Lockhart’s Ancient Spanish Ballads, p. 75.

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Passage of
arms at
Orbigo.

On the first day of the year 1434, while the Spanish court was holding its festivities at Medina del Campo, a noble knight, named Sueno de Quinones, presented himself before the King (John II.) with a train of nine cavaliers gallantly arrayed, whose lofty demeanour and armorial ensigns showed that they prided themselves on the perfect purity of their Christian descent. The King smiled graciously on the strangers; and learning from his attendants that they had come to court in order to address his power, he waved his hand in sign of permission for them to speak. A herald, whom they had brought with them, stepped in front, and in the name of Sueno de Quinones spoke thus: "It is just and reasonable that any one who has been so long in imprisonment as I have been should desire his liberty; and, as your vassal and subject, I appear before you to state, that I have been long bound in service to a noble lady; and, as is well known, through heralds, not only in this country but through foreign lands, every Thursday I am obliged to wear a chain of iron round my neck. But, with the aid of the Apostle James, I have discovered a means of liberation. I and my nine noble friends propose, during the fifteen days that precede and the fifteen days that follow the festival of that Saint, to break three

hundred lances, with Milan points *, in the following manner: Three lances with every knight who shall pass this way on his road to the shrine of the Saint. Armour and weapons will be provided in ample store for such cavaliers as shall travel only in palmer's weeds. All noble ladies who shall be on their pilgrimage unattended by a chivalric escort must be contented to lose their right-hand glove till a knight shall recover it by the valour of his arm."

When the herald concluded, the King and his council conferred together, and they soon agreed that the laws of chivalry obliged them to consent to the accomplishing of this emprise of arms. When the royal permission was proclaimed by the heralds, Sueno got a noble knight to take off his helmet, and thus, bareheaded, approached the throne, and humbly thanked the King. He afterwards retired with his nine friends; and having exchanged their heavy armour for silken dresses of festivity, they returned to the hall and joined the dance.

Six months were to elapse before the valiant and amorous Sueno de Quinones could be delivered from his shackle; and all that time was spent by him and his friends in exercising them-

* This is another and singular proof of the generally acknowledged excellence of Italian armour.

CHAP. V. selves to the use of the lance, and in providing stores of harness and lances for such knights as would joust with them. The place that was arranged for the contest was the bridge Orbigo, six hours' ride from Leon, and three from Astorga. The marble effigies of a herald was set up in the road; and by the label in its right hand travellers were acquainted that they had reached the passage of arms. The lists were erected in a beautiful plain formed by nature in a neighbouring wood. Tents for banqueting and repose were raised, and amply furnished by the liberality of Sueno. One tent was admirable for the beauty of its decorations, and more so for its purpose. It contained seven noble ladies, who, at the request of the mother of Sueno, devoted themselves to attend upon such of the knights as should be wounded in the joust. At the time appointed, Sueno de Quinones appeared in the lists with his nine companions, all arrayed in the most splendid tourneying harness, the enamoured knight himself bearing round his neck the chain of his mistress, with the motto, which his friends also wore on some part of their armour, "*Il faut délibérer.*" Many stranger knights jousted with him, and his success was generally distinguished.

The fair penitents to the shrine of the saint were stopped; and such as were of noble birth

were asked by the King's herald to deliver their gloves. The pride and prerogatives of the sex were offended at this demand : the ladies resisted, as much as words and looks of high disdain could resist, the representative of the King ; but they yielded with grace and pleasure, when they were asked to surrender their gloves in the name of the laws of chivalry, of those laws which had been made under their auspices, and for their benefit. There was no lack of knights to peril themselves for the recovery of these gloves in the listed plain ; and if the champions of the dames were ever worsted by the hardier sons of chivalry, the gallantry of the judges of the tournament would not permit the ladies to suffer from any want of skill or good fortune in their chosen knights. When the thirty days had expired, it appeared that sixty-eight knights had entered the lists against Sueno de Quinones ; and in seven hundred and twenty-seven encounters only sixty-six lances had been broken ; — a chivalric phrase, expressive either of the actual shivering of lances, or of men being thrown out of their saddles. The judges of the tournament, however, declared, that although the number of lances broken was not equal to the undertaking, yet as such a partial performance of the conditions of the passage at arms had not been the fault of Sueno de Quinones, they commanded the

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CHAP. V. king at arms to take the chain from his neck, and to declare that the emprise had been achieved : accordingly the chain was removed, and the delivered knight entered Leon in triumph.*

Knights
travel and
joust for
ladies' love.

The knights of Spain were, indeed, on every occasion gallant as well as brave. When the heralds of France and England crossed the Pyrenees to proclaim the tournaments, which were to be held in honour of woman's beauty, there was no lack of Spanish cavaliers to obey the sound, and assert the charms of the dark-eyed maidens of their land. This was their wont during all the ages of chivalry ; and so late as the fifteenth century one of them travelled so far as England by command of his mistress, and for her sake wished to run a course with sharp spears. His dress confirmed his challenge ; for he wore round his arm a kerchief of pleasance, with which his lady-love had graced him before he set out on his perilous quest of honour.† This historical fact is very important, as proving that the writers of Spanish tales, in describing the deep devotion of Spanish love, the fidelity which no time nor absence could shake, drew their pictures from no imaginary originals. The ro-

* Libro del paso honroso, defendido por el excelente caballero Sueno de Quinones, copilado de un libro antiquo de mano, por Juan de Pineda. 1588. Reprinted, Madrid, 1783.

† Paston, Letters, vol. i. p. 6.

mancers shadowed forth the manners of their nation, like the good-humoured satirist, Cervantes, who, while ridiculing the absurdities of knight-errantry, as displayed in works of fiction, never forgot the seriousness approaching to solemnity, the perfect courtesy, the loftiness, and the generosity of the Castilian gentleman. CHAP. V.

While the knights of England were admiring the gallantry of the Spanish cavalier, who appeared among them to render himself worthy the smiles of his lady-love, another knight of Spain, named Sir John de Merlo, or Melo, left his native land to add new honours to his shield. He repaired to the court of Philip, Duke of Burgundy, which was then held at Arras, and proclaiming that he wished to joust, in order to win that high fame which was the guerdon of chivalry, he sounded his challenge for any noble knight to break three lances with him. It was not long before that proved and renowned cavalier, Peter de Bauffremont, Lord of Chargny, answered the challenge, prevailing, in return, on the Spaniard to consent to tourney with him on foot with battle-axes, swords, and daggers. The two noble knights then appeared in the lists of the market-place at Arras, which had been fashioned into a tilting ground. The Duke of Burgundy sat as judge of the lists; and he was surrounded by the Dukes of Bourbon and of

CHAP. V. Gueldres, the Counts of Rochemont, of Vendome, d'Estampes, and, indeed, the chiefest nobility of his states. The Spanish knight entered then the lists, followed by four noble cavaliers of Burgundy, whom the Duke had appointed to do him honourable service. One of them bore on the end of a lance a small banner emblazoned with his arms. The other knights carried his lances, and thus, without more pomp, he courteously made his obeisance to the Duke of Burgundy, and retired from his presence by the way he had entered on the left hand of His Grace. After a pause extended beyond the wonted time, in order to raise the expectations of the spectators into anxiety, the Lord of Chargny pressed his bounding steed into the lists. He was grandly accompanied by three Burgundian lords, and the English Earl of Suffolk, all bearing his lances. Behind him were four coursers, richly caparisoned with his arms and devices, with pages covered with robes of wrought silver; and the procession was closed by the greater part of the knights and squires of the Duke of Burgundy's household. The Lord of Chargny gracefully bent his body while his proud steed was performing its caracoles, and he then retired through a gate opposite to that of the Spanish knight. At the signal of the Duke the trumpets sounded to horse, the knights pricked forth, the herald's cry resounded,

“Faites vos devoirs, preux chevaliers ;” and the career of the gallant warriors deserved the noblest meed ; for they tilted with their lances with such admirable skill, that though their weapons shivered, neither cavalier was hurt. The second and the third courses were ran with similar chivalric bearing, and the morning’s amusement closed. CHAP. V.

On the next day the Duke of Burgundy, followed by all his chivalry, repaired to the marketplace of Arras, in order to witness the second series of these martial games. The Lord of Chargny, as the challenger, appeared first ; and it was full an hour before Sir John de Merlo entered the lists : for the Spaniard resolved to retort the delay which the Lord of Chargny had made on the preceding morning. The king-at-arms, called Golden Fleece, proclaimed, in three different parts of the lists, that all who had not been otherwise ordered should retire to the galleries, or without the rails ; and that no one should give any hinderance to the two champions, under pain of being punished, by the Duke of Burgundy, with death. The knights then advanced from their respective pavilions, wielding their battle-axes. They were armed in proof ; but the Spanish knight, with more than the wonted boldness of chivalry, wore his vizor raised. They rushed upon each other

CHAP. V. with impetuous daring, and exchanged many mighty blows ; but the Lord of Chargny was sore displeased that his adversary did not close his vizor. After they had well proved their valour, the Duke of Burgundy threw down his warder, and the jousting ceased. But the noble knights themselves exclaimed against so early a termination of their chivalric sports ; particularly the Spaniard, who declared, as the reason for his anger, that he had travelled at a great expence, and with much fatigue by sea and land, from a far country, to acquire honour and renown. But the Duke remained firm, only soothing his denial by complimenting him on the honourable mode in which he had accomplished his challenge ; and, afterwards, the Burgundian nobles vied with each other in praising a cavalier who had shown the unprecedented daring of fighting with his vizor raised. The Duke also entertained him in his palace ; and, in admiration of his bravery, made him so many rich presents, that the expences of his journey were amply reimbursed. He soon afterwards mounted his good steed, and left Arras on his return to his own country ; and beguiled the long and lonely way by recollections of the past, and dreams of future glory. *

* Monstrelet, vol. vii. c. 82.

The remainder of the history of Spanish chivalry, namely, its decline, may be shortly told. All its martial forms were destroyed by the iron yoke of the house of Austria; and so perfectly, that, in the state of things which succeeded the warfare of the shield and the lance, the Spanish infantry took the lead, and was the most skilful in Europe. At the battle of Ravenna, in the year 1512, they defeated the chivalry of France, and proved the excellence of the new system of warfare. Something, however, of that excellence must be attributed to the spirit of ancient knight-hood; for it borrowed the principles of its discipline from ancient times.

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 Extinction
of Spanish
chivalry.

In one respect the chivalry of Spain resembled the general chivalry of Europe in its decline; for, at the introduction of the art of printing into the Peninsula, the old romances were the first subjects of the press, as works most agreeable to national taste. Although Spanish poetry was now but a faint copy of the Italian muse, yet the spirit of the antique song occasionally breathed, in wild and fitful notes, the heroism and loves of other times. The point of honour was long preserved as the gem of the Spanish character; and chivalric gallantry continued intense and imaginative, for Arabian literature left impressions on the Spanish mind which the Inquisition could not efface; and thus, while in other

CHAP. V. countries of Europe woman was gradually despoiled of those divine perfections with which the fine and gallant spirit of chivalry had invested her, and moved among mortals as formed of mortal nature, yet, in the imagination of the grave, the musing Spaniard, she was preserved in her proud pre-eminence, and was still the object of his heart's idolatry.

CHAP. VI.

PROGRESS OF CHIVALRY IN GERMANY AND ITALY.

*Chivalry did not affect the public History of Germany
Its Influence on Imperial Manners.....Intolerance
 and Cruelty of German Knights.....Their Harshness to
 their Squires Avarice of the Germans Little
 Influence of German Chivalry.....A remarkable Excep-
 tion to this.....A Female Tournament.....Maximilian,
 the only chivalric Emperor of Germany Joust be-
 tween him and a French Knight Edict of Fre-
 deric III. destroyed Chivalry.....CHIVALRY IN ITALY :
 — Lombards carried Chivalry thither.....Stories of chi-
 valric Gallantry But little martial Chivalry in
 Italy.....Condottieri.....Chivalry in the North.....
 Italians excellent Armourers but bad Knights Chi-
 valry in the South Curious Circumstances attending
 Knighthood at Naples.....Mode of creating Knights in
 Italy generally.....Political Use of Knighthood
 Chivalric Literature.....Chivalric Sports.*

CHIVALRY may be considered either in a poli-
 tical or a military aspect, either as influencing the
 destinies of nations, or affecting the mode and
 circumstances of war. In Germany it offers
 to us no circumstances of the former class.
 Germany was connected with Italy more than

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Chivalry
 did not af-
 fect the
 public his-
 tory of Ger-
 many.

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with any other country of Europe during the middle ages. The wars of the emperors for the kingdom of Italy did not proceed from any principles or feelings that can be termed chivalric; nor can any ingenuity torture the fierce contests between the popes and the emperors into knightly encounters. The chivalry of Germany seldom appeared in generous rivalry with that of any other country; and in circumstances which leave no doubt of the issue, if the chivalry of England or France had been engaged, the Imperial knights quailed before partially-disciplined militia. In Italy the power of Milan was more dreaded than that of the Emperor Frederic Barbarossa; and he subdued the northern states rather by drawing their cities to his side, which were jealous of the Milanese authority, than by the force of his chivalry. A few years afterwards the cities of Lombardy formed a league against him; and when the question of Italian independence was debated in arms, the militia of the cities triumphed over the flower of German chivalry in the battle of Legnano. Nor could Germany ever afterwards thoroughly re-establish her power. Many political circumstances and moral reasons prevented it; but the weakness of her military arm was the chief and prevailing cause.

The Germans invented nothing in chivalry, and borrowed nothing from the superior institutions of other countries. At the commencement of the fifteenth century the inferiority of their chivalry was plainly displayed. The German cuirassiers, with whom the Emperor Robert descended into Italy, could not cope with the condottieri of Jacopo Verme, who protected the states of Gian Galeazzo Visconti. It was found that the horses of the Germans were not so well trained as those of the Italians, and the armour of the knights was heavy and unwieldy; and thus the bigoted attachment of the Germans to ancient customs saved Italy from subjugation.* The cuirassiers of Germany were equally impotent against the hardy peasantry of Switzerland.

* Sismondi. *Hist. des Rep. Ital.* vii. 439. The Germans were more observant of the forms than of the spirit of chivalry. The reader remembers that the spur, the golden spur, was the great mark of knighthood; and every ancient church in this country, or a copy of its antique monumental effigies, will inform him of the custom of placing a spur over or upon a knight's tomb. This was also a custom among the Germans, who, besides, reposed spurs in churches, when age, infirmity, or other causes, unnerved the arm of the knight: moreover, they reposed spurs in churches as memorials of victory. In the fourteenth century five hundred pair of them, which had been taken in a victory over the French, were hung round the walls of the church at Gröningen. *Ritterzeit und Ritterwesen*, p. 212.

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Its in-
fluence on
imperial
manners.

Though not in the public history, yet in what may be called the manners, of the empire, there was one great chivalric feature. The dignity of service was strikingly displayed. The proudest nobles were the servants of the Emperor, his butler, his falconer, his marshal, his chamberlain; and, insensibly, - as every student of German history knows, the principal officers of state usurped from the other nobles the right of electing the Emperor.

Intolerance
and cruelty
of German
knights.

Chivalry was chiefly known in Germany as the embodying of a ferocious spirit of religious persecution. The nation, therefore, embarked in the crusades to the Holy Land with fierceness, unchecked by chivalric gallantry, and recklessly poured out its best blood in the chace of a phantom. Prussia, and other countries at the north of Germany, were tardy in embracing Christianity; and the sword became the instrument of conversion. The Teutonic knights were particularly active in this pious work, when the Mamlouk Tartars had driven them from Palestine. In other countries, the defence of the church, and hostilities against infidels, though considered as knightly duties, were not protruded beyond other obligations: but in Germany, so prominently were they placed, that a cavalier used to hold himself bound, by his general oath of chivalry,

to prepare for battle the moment of a war being declared, either against infidels or heretics. *

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The German knight differed in character from the knight of other countries, though his education was similar. The course of that education is detailed in one of the most interesting German poems, the *Das Heldenbuch*, or Book of Heroes.

“The princes young, were taught to protect all ladies fair,
Priests they bad them honour, and to the mass repair;
All holy Christian lore were they taught, I plight:
Hughdietrick and his noble queen caused priests to
guide them right.

Bechtung taught them knightly games; on the war-
horse firm to sit;

To leap, and to defend them; rightly the mark to hit;
Cunningly to give the blow, and to throw the lance
afar:

Thence the victory they gain'd, in many a bloody war.

Right before their breasts to bear the weighty shield,
In battle and in tournament quaintly the sword to
wield;

Strongly to lace the helmets on, when call'd to wage
the fight,

All to the royal brothers, Bechtung taught aright.

* Olaus. Hist. Septent. lib. xiv. c. 7.

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He taught them o'er the plain far to hurl the weighty
rock ;

Mighty was their strength, and fearful was the shock :
When o'er the plain resounded the heavy stone aloud,
Six furlongs threw beyond the rest Woldieterick the
Proud." *

Cruelty of
knights to
their squires.

Though the education of the squire in Germany many resembled the education of the squire in other countries, yet his state was not equally happy. The duties of the German youth were painful ; and, though menial, as, indeed, were many of the duties of all squires, yet they were ungraced by those softening circumstances of manners which distinguished chivalric nurture in France and England.† The squires, too, were more frequently persons of humble birth than of gentle condition ; and knighthood, therefore, was not always the reward of their toils. The knights were cruel and severe to their young attendants. It happened once, and the circumstance illustrates the general state of manners, that when a knight was in the midst of a baronial revelling, three of his squires rushed into the hall, with the wild action of fear, and stood trembling before him. He coldly de-

* Illustrations of Northern Antiquities, from the Teutonic and Scandinavian Romances, p. 76.

† Ritterzeit und Ritterwesen, vol. i. p. 59.

manded where were the rest. As soon as their fear allowed them to speak, they said that their whole band had been fighting with his enemies, and that eight of them had fallen. Totally unmoved by the fate of his brave and devoted young friends, and thinking only of the rigidity of discipline, he answered, "You are rightly served: who bade you ride without my orders?"* Well, indeed, then, may we say, with the old German authority for this story, that the man who hath held the office of squire has learnt what it is to feel the depths of pain and ignominy.

No country was more desolated by private war in the middle ages than Germany; and chivalry, instead of ameliorating the mode of warfare, acquired a character of wildness from the perpetual scene of horror.†

There was no Bertrand du Guesclin, no Black Prince, no Manny, no Chandos, in Germany: there was a rudeness about the knighthood of the Teutonic cavaliers different from its state in other nations. The humanities, which it was the principle of Christian chivalry to throw over the rugged front of war, were but little felt in Germany, though Germany was the very

* Ritterzeit und Ritterwesen, vol. i. p. 60.

† Ibid. p. 71.

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—Avarice of
the Ger-
mans.

cradle of chivalry. I need not repeat the cruelties which were inflicted upon Richard Cœur de Lion, during his return from the Holy Land. Two centuries afterwards, when chivalry was in its high and palmy state in other countries, the Germans continued uncourteous knights. They were a high and proud people, never admitting foreign cavaliers to companionship and brotherhood. But avarice was their most detestable quality, and effectually extinguished all sentiments of honour. “When a German hath taken a prisoner,” says Froissart, “he putteth him into irons, and into hard prison, without any pity, to make him pay the greater finance and ransom.”* On the probability arising of a war between Germany and France, the French counsellors dissuaded their King, Charles V., from thinking of engaging in it in person, on account of the character of the enemy. It was said, if the King went into Germany, there would be but little chance of his returning. “When they (the Germans) shall know that the King and all the great nobles of France are entered into their country, they will then assemble all together; and, by their better knowledge of the land, they may do us great damage; for they are a covetous people, above all other. They have no pity if they have the upper hand;

* Froissart, vol. i. c. 433.

and they demean themselves with cruelty to their prisoners: they put them to sundry pains, to compel them to make their ransoms the greater; and if they have a lord, or a great man, for their captive, they make great joy thereof, and will convey him into Bohemia, Austria, or Saxony, and keep him in some uninhabitable castle. They are people worse than Saracens or paynims; for their excessive covetousness quencheth the knowledge of honour.” *

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As the corrective of the violences of feudal licentiousness, no where was chivalry more required, and no where was it less known than in Germany. It is not possible to exaggerate the enormities of the nobility, and, I fear, of the clergy, during all that long tract of time which is called the age of chivalry. Each castle was a den of thieves; and an archbishop thought he had a fair revenue before him, when he built his fortress on the junction of four roads.† To preserve the people from the rapaciousness and cruelty of these noble and clerical robbers, knights-errant sometimes scoured the plain; but this mode of corrective was very imperfectly applied. It was in the cities and towns, which were protected by the Emperors, that the oppressed and injured people found refuge.

Little influence of German chivalry.

* Froissart, liv. ii. c. 125.

† Schmidt, iv. 492.

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While the German historians seldom mention the protecting influence of knight-errantry, they constantly represent the benefit of towns, and press the fact upon the readers, that it was the tyranny of the nobles which occasioned their growth. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries there were confederacies among towns, and confederacies among the nobility: the former associations were formed in order to repel the aggressions of the latter. This is a feature in German history totally unknown to other countries of the great republic of Europe, and distinct from all chivalric origin or chivalric effects.

A remarkable exception to this.

Except in the occasional adventurousness of knights-errant, chivalry was but once concerned in repressing the evils of the time, and interwoven with the interesting circumstances of that occasion is one of the most amusing stories in all the long annals of knighthood. The citizens, in conveying their merchandizes from one place to another, suffered dreadfully from the rapine of the barons; and finding the weapons used by common people were an insufficient protection, they wisely and boldly armed themselves in the manner of their enemies. They wielded the lance and sword, rode the heavy war-horse, practised tournaments and other martial games, and even attended tournaments in castles

and courts; assuming for the occasion the armorial distinctions of noble families who were distant from the scene. So much did this state of citizenship resemble that of knighthood, that all the castles on the Rhine were not inhabited by barons and knights only.

In the fourteenth century, a band of bold and wealthy burghers established themselves with their wives and children in one of the largest of these fortresses, as a barrier against the maraudings of the nobility. They became so powerful, and their deportment was so chivalric, that some of the neighbouring knights formed alliances with them. A potent baron harassed them in various ways; and after various battles, each party was willing that words, and not the sword, should terminate the war. They accordingly met on a spot of border-land, and, after arranging the immediate subject of dispute, they embraced as brothers in chivalry. While these citizen-knights were absent, the women, who remained behind, joyfully assembled on a sunny plain, which spread itself before the castle. They walked up and down, each lady praising the martial qualities of her lord. As the discourse proceeded, they became inspired with that heroic courage which they were commending, till at length they ordered the war-horses to be brought out with armour and weapons, resolving to

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A female
tournament.

hold a tournament. They were soon mounted and armed, and they took the names of their husbands. There was a maiden among them, and as modesty forbade her to take the name of any man of her own station in life, she chose the title of a neighbouring duke. She performed the martial exercises with such strength and adroitness, that most of the married women were cast by her from their saddles, and paid dearly, by their wounds, for their temerity and adventurousness. They then left the plain, and such of them as were injured retired to their chambers, strictly charging the servants and pages to make no disclosure of what had passed. When the knights returned, and found the horses covered with foam and dust, and few ladies to greet them, they enquired the cause of this unwonted appearance. For a while no answer could be gained; but at length they terrified a boy into a detail of the story. They laughed right merrily at the folly of their wives; and when, soon afterwards, they met some of the Rhenish knights at a festival, they made the hall echo with the tale, and it was soon bruited over all Germany. The duke, under whose name the honours of the tournament had been won, was surprised and pleased with the heroism of the maiden. He sought her out, gave her rich presents, not only in money, but a war-steed and

a gentle palfrey, and united her in honourable marriage to a wealthy burgher. *

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In the character of the emperors of Germany, as seen in their public lives, little of the chivalric nature can be marked. The Fredericks and the Othos more nearly resemble our Norman Williams, than our Plantagenet Edwards. It is singular that the only chivalric emperor in Germany was the Prince in whose reign German chivalry expired. Maximilian I. was educated in the strictest discipline of chivalry. All his youthful studies and occupations had relation to his chivalric deportment; and German writers have been fond of remarking, that while he was a mere child, he and another boy were wont to ride on men's backs, and fight with wooden swords in imitation of a joust. †

Maximilian
the only
chivalric
emperor of
Germany.

He was afterwards a very gallant cavalier. When in the year 1495, he was holding his states at Worms, a French knight, named Claude de Batre, arrived at the city, and proclaimed by his herald that he was ready to meet in combat any German knight who was willing to stake life, limb, or liberty, or contend for any knightly distinction in a personal encounter. Among the nobles and knights that were present, no one seemed willing to accept the challenge; for, be-

Joust be-
tween him
and a
French
knight.

* Ritterzeit und Ritterwesen, p. 108.

† Ibid. vol. i. p. 7.

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sides the report of the Frenchman's gigantic strength, fame had armed him with supernatural and satanic powers. The courageous Maximilian could not endure to see the German chivalry braved and bearded by a stranger, and he sent a herald with his own shield, ornamented with the arms of Austria and Burgundy, to lay it alongside that of the Frenchman. The Emperor and the knight then agreed that on the morning of the tenth day from that time they would appear in public, armed, and fight to the utterance. The person of the conquered was to remain at the victor's disposal. The joust was regarded as a matter of more interest and importance than the public affairs which the Diet was assembled to arrange. On the appointed morning all the brave, and all the fair of Germany, met round the splendid lists which the Emperor had erected for the purpose. The herald's trumpet centered the attention of the spectators, — its second flourish hushed every murmur, — and when its third and loudest blast sounded, Maximilian and Claude de Batre pricked forwards at speed through opposite gates into the lists, and opposed lance to lance. Their weapons splintered, and they drew their swords. The fight was long and obstinate; but the skill of the French knight only served to exalt the heroism of the Emperor: for, finally, Maximilian

disarmed his antagonist, and proved the excellence of the German chivalry.*

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It was Frederic III., the father of Maximilian, who gave the first blow to the ancient chivalry of Germany. He passed an edict allowing citizens to receive knighthood; a permission which tarnished the splendour of the order, and disgusted the old cavaliers.† This measure was a fatal one; for Germany above all other countries had been jealous of the pure nobility of its knighthood. Knighthood was more the adjunct of rank than the reward of merit; and the Germans were more solicitous to examine the quarters of a shield than the martial deserts of the bearer, more desirous to mark his ancestors' deeds than his own. The edict of Frederic destroyed the pride of chivalry. Knighthood was then conferred on boys who were scarcely able to perform the duties of squires, and on children at the baptismal font. But, in truth, the destruction of knighthood in Germany was no real evil. Chivalry had not been a perfect defence of the empire, as the Austrians and Swabians had found in their contests with the Hungarians.

Edicts of
Frederick
III. de-
stroyed
chivalry.

On one occasion, in particular, during the thirteenth century, the knights and squires of Germany

* Ritterzeit und Ritterwesen, vol. ii. p. 61.

† Ibid. vol. ii. p. 272.

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were sorely galled on the plains of Hungary by the arrows of the enemy, and vainly wished for a close and personal encounter. An Austrian archer advised the chivalry with whom he served to retreat, and draw the Hungarians far from their homes. This counsel the knights and squires, from pride and suspicion of the man's fidelity, rejected; but the danger pressed, the showers of arrows became thicker and more frequent, and the Austrian and Swabian horses being but partially barded, were either slain or rendered unmanageable. Each knight watched the countenance of his companion, to read in it hope or advice, till at length one of them exclaimed, "Let us send a messenger to these dastardly foes inviting them to peace, or to a manly and chivalric contest, for honour and love of ladies." A squire was dispatched, but was shot by an Hungarian arrow. The Austrian leader then called to his side a well-experienced knight, and bade him ride to the Hungarian General, and invoke him by his chivalry to terminate this unknighly conflict. The old warrior replied, that if he were to carry such a message, the Hungarian would infallibly answer, that he was not such a fool as to place his unharnessed men in a level and equal line against the mail-clad chivalry of Austria; and that if the

Austrians would doff their armour, the Hungarians would fight them hand to hand.

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The danger became more and more imminent, and the Germans had no hope of escape; for they could not expect, as if they had been fighting with the chivalry of France, that a surrender of their horses and arms, and an honourable treaty for their own persons' ransom, would satisfy the foe. Finally, they were compelled to yield at discretion; and it is interesting to observe, that the Austrian archer, whose counsel had been despised, and who it appears might have saved himself if he would, remained at his station, and nobly shared the fate of his lords. Instead of meeting with any knightly courtesy, the whole were led away into Hungary, and pined out their days in prison.*

Many other instances of the inefficacy of the German chivalry might be adduced, but the truth is so apparent on every page of the history of Germany, that no particular instances are necessary. Other circumstances contributed to its fall. The privileges of knighthood had been found inconvenient by the emperors. In the field of battle the cavaliers often claimed an independence which was detrimental to imperial authority. Maximilian I., therefore,

* Ottokar v. Hornek, c. 268, &c. in his *Annals of Austria*.

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introduced mercenaries into his army. Such of them as were natives of other countries brought with them every well-practised species of war, and raised the German military power to a level with that of the other nations of Europe. The inadequacy of the German chivalry to the present times was therefore so apparent, that no person wished to see the spirit of knight-hood revived. Chivalry ceased to be a national characteristic, and its badges and honours passed into the court to become the signs of imperial favour.*

We will now cross the Alps into

ITALY.

Lombards
carried chi-
valry into
Italy.

We shall ascend sufficiently high into the antiquities of nations, if we observe that the system of manners from which chivalry sprang was brought by the Lombards from Germany into the north of Italy. With them in their new, as it had been in their original, seats, the title to bear arms was a distinction conferred by the state, and not a subject of private will and choice. A son did not presume to sit at the

* Ritterzeit und Ritterwesen, vol. ii. last chapter.

same table with his father. For the instruction of youth in military affairs there were public spectacles on Sundays, and on festivals, in imitation of a knightly *mêlée*. A town or city was divided into two parts, each having its defenders. The mock battles were either general or between small parties, the weapons were made of wood, the helmets were safely padded, and the young warriors displayed splendid banners adorned with fanciful cognisances.* The amusement of hawking, which distinguished the Gothic from the Latin and most southern tribes, was common with the Lombards†: but more than all the rest, a tone of chivalric gallantry was given to the Italians, even by these long-bearded barbarians.

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Antharis, one of the Lombard kings, sought in marriage Theudelinda, a daughter of the King of Bavaria; and not wishing to judge through another's eyes, he disguised himself as a private man, and accompanied his ambassadors to the Bavarian court. After the conditions of the marriage had been discussed and the ceremonies arranged, the disguised prince stepped before the crowd, and, saluting the King, declared that he was the personal friend of Antharis, who wished to receive from him a description of the lady's charms. Theudelinda ac-

Stories of
chivalric
gallantry.

* Muratori, Dissert. 29.

† Ibid. 23.

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cordingly appeared, and the first glance assured Antharis of her being worthy of his love. He did not betray his rank to the assembly ; but not altogether able to conceal his joy, he touched the hand of the royal damsel as she presented him a cup of wine ; and the matrons about the court, excellent judges of signs of passion, whispered their assurance that such an act of bold familiarity could never have been committed by a mere public or personal representative of Antharis.*

For several centuries chivalry shed but few and transient gleams of light over the gloomy waste of Italian history, and I can only select one event which paints in beautiful colours the spirit of romantic gallantry. The wife of Lothaire, King of Italy from the year 945 to 948, was Adelais, a princess of the house of Burgundy. Lothaire was deposed, perhaps murdered by his minister, Berenger ; and the usurper persecuted, with the cruelty of fear, Adelais, who has been described by monkish chroniclers, and chivalry will not contradict the character, as being young and beautiful. He confined her in a subterraneous dungeon ; and, as if personal insult was his best security, he deprived her of her

* Giannone, lib. i.

jewels and her royal apparel. A female servant was her only companion during four months of confinement, wherein she was made to endure every mortification which a noble mind can be exposed to. Her wretched condition was at length discovered by a priest, named Martin, who had not in the retirement of a cloister lost the sympathies of humanity. He immediately employed himself to effect her rescue, and, unseen by her jealous keepers, he worked an aperture through the earth and walls sufficient to admit a slender female form to pass. He conveyed male habiliments into the dungeon, to deceive the eyes of her jailors, and, apparelled in them, Adelais and her attendant made their escape. They were met at the entrance of the aperture by their faithful monk, who fled with them to the most probable place of safety, a wood near the lake Benacus. The wants of nature were furnished to them by a poor man who gained a precarious livelihood by fishing in the lake. Recovered from their fatigue and alarm, Martin left the wood to provide for his fair friend some surer place of safety. He went to the Bishop of Reggio, who, though a humane and well-purposed man, was unable to oppose the might of Berenger. Still the matter was not hopeless, for he remembered that there was dwelling in the impregnable fortress of Canossa

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a virtuous and adventurous knight. To him, therefore, Martin addressed himself, and Azzo listened to his complaint. He and a chosen band of cavaliers donned their harness, and, repairing to the lake Benacus, conducted thence the persecuted Adelais to the fortress of Canossa. And this was well and chivalrously achieved, for virtue was protected; and in affording this protection, Azzo defied the power of the King of Italy. The subsequent fate of Adelais it falls not within my province to detail. The student of Italian history knows that she married Otho the Great, Emperor of Germany, and that this marriage was a main cause of uniting the sovereignties of Germany and Italy. *

But little
martial chi-
valry in
Italy.

The growth and developement of chivalry in subsequent times were checked by political circumstances. Of them the chief was the formation of the republics in the north of Italy during the twelfth century. The power of the feudal nobility was far less than in any other country, and the nobles were the humble allies

* Muratori, *Annali d'Italia*, vol. v. part 2. p. 171, &c. Even the Modenese librarian throws aside his dust and parchments, and warms himself into a humanised being at this story; while Sismondi passes it over with frigid indifference.

of the towns.* The citizens trusted rather to the security of their fortifications than their own strength in the field, for their infantry could not resist the charges of Italian cavalry; and, except such nobles as were in alliance with them, their force consisted of infantry. The superiority of the chivalric array of the various lords and feudal princes of Italy to the militia of the cities† was one great cause of that great political revolution, — the change of the republics into tyrannies. The power of knights over armed burghers having been experienced, and the towns not possessing in sufficient numbers a force of cavalry, the practice arose of hiring the service of bodies of lancers, who were commonly gentlemen of small fortune but of great pretensions, and who found war the readiest way of gratifying their proud and luxurious desires: In the fourteenth century another great change

* Muratori, Dissert. 49.

† See in the twenty-seventh Dissertation of Muratori (*Della Milizia de secoli rozzi in Italia*) for a minute account of the armour of these different classes. I observe that Mr. Perceval, in his *History of Italy*, vol. i. p. 197., holds a different opinion from that which I have expressed in the text. Instead of thinking that the change in the military art formed one of the causes which hastened the overthrow of the Lombard liberties, he contends that, perhaps, it might be more correctly numbered among the circumstances which, after that overthrow had been accomplished, perpetuated the work of slavery.

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Condottieri.

occurred in the military affairs of Italy. I shall lay it before my readers in the lucid diction of the English historian of that country. “ The successive expeditions of Henry VII., of Louis of Bavaria, and of John of Bohemia, had filled Italy with numerous bands of German cavalry, who, on the retirement of their sovereigns, were easily tempted to remain in a rich and beautiful country, where their services were eagerly demanded, and extravagantly paid. The revolution in the military art, which in the preceding century established the resistless superiority of a mounted *gens-d’armes* over the burgher infantry, had habituated every state to confide its security to bodies of mercenary cavalry; and the Lombard tyrants in particular, who founded their power upon these forces, were quick in discovering the advantage of employing foreign adventurers, who were connected with their disaffected subjects by no ties of country or community of language. Their example was soon universally followed, native cavalry fell into strange disrepute; and the Italians, without having been conquered in the field, unaccountably surrendered the decision of their quarrels and the superiority in courage and military skill, to mercenaries of other countries. When this custom of employing foreign troops was once introduced, new swarms of adventurers were

continually attracted from beyond the Alps to reap the rich harvest of pay and booty which were spread before them. In a country so perpetually agitated by wars among its numerous states, they found constant occupation, and, what they loved more, unbridled licence. Ranging themselves under the standards of chosen leaders—the condottieri, or captains of mercenary bands,—they passed in bodies of various strength from one service to another, as their terms of engagement expired, or the temptation of higher pay invited; their chieftains and themselves alike indifferent to the cause which they supported; alike faithless, rapacious, and insolent. Upon every trifling disgust they were ready to go over to the enemy: their avarice and treachery were rarely proof against seduction; and, though their regular pay was five or six times greater in the money of the age than that of modern armies, they exacted a large gratuity for every success. As they were usually opposed by troops of the same description, whom they regarded rather as comrades than enemies, they fought with little earnestness, and designedly protracted their languid operations to ensure the continuance of their emoluments. But while they occasioned each other little loss, they afflicted the country which was the theatre of contest with every horror of warfare: they pillaged, they burnt,

CHAP. they violated, and massacred with devilish
VI. ferocity." *

Gradually these foreign condottieri, when not engaged in the service of any particular power, levied war like independent sovereigns ; and Italy had fresh reason to repent the jealousy which had made her distrust her own sons. They fought with tenfold more fury now that the contest was no longer carried on by one troop of condottieri against another, but against the Italians themselves, to whom no tie of nature bound them ; and so far was any cavaleresque generosity from mitigating the horrors of their wars, that one adventurer, Werner was his name, and Germany his country, declared, by an inscription which was blazoned on his corslet, that he was "the enemy of God, of pity, and of mercy." But the power of these foreign condottieri was not perpetual. Nature rose to vindicate her rights ; and there were many daring spirits among the Italians, who, if not emulous of the fame, were jealous of the dominion of strangers. The company of Saint George, founded by Alberico de Barbiano, a marauding chief of Romagna, was the school of Italian generals. In the fifteenth century, the force of every state was led by an Italian, if not a native citizen ;

* Perceval's History of Italy, vol.i. chap. 5. part 1.

and when the Emperor Robert crossed the Alps with the gens-d'armes of Germany, the Milanese, headed by Jacopo del Verme, encountered him near Brescia, and overthrew all his chivalry.

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In northern Italy no knightlike humanities softened the vindictiveness of the Italian mind. Warriors never admitted prisoners to ransom. The annals of their contests are destitute of those graceful courtesies which shed such a beautiful lustre over the contests of England and France. No cavalier ever thought of combating for his lady's sake, and a lady's favour was never blended with his heraldic insignia. There were no regular defiances to war as in other countries: honour, that animating principle of chivalry, was not known; the object of the conquest was regarded to the exclusion of fame and military distinction. Stratagems were as common as open and glorious battle; and private injuries were revenged by assassination and not by the fair and manly joust à l'outrance: and yet when a man pledged his word for the performance of any act, and wished his sincerity to be believed, he always swore by the *parola di cavaliere, e non di cortigiano*; so general and forcible was the acknowledgment of chivalry's moral superiority. I know nothing in the history of the middle ages more dark with crime

Chivalry in
the north of
Italy.

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Italians
excellent
armourers,
but bad
knights.

than the wars of the Italians, — nothing that displays by contrast more beautifully the graces of chivalry; and yet the Italian condottieri were brave to the very height of valour. Before them the German chivalry quailed, as it had formerly done before the militia of the towns.

In the deep feelings and ardent and susceptible imaginations of the Italians, chivalry, it might seem, could have raised her fairest triumph; but chivalry had no fellowship with a mercenary spirit, and sordid gain was the only motive of the Italian soldiers. Their acute and intelligent minds preceded most other people in military inventions. To them, in particular, is to be attributed the introduction of the long and pointed sword, against which the hauberk, or coat of mail, was no protection. They took the lead in giving the tone to military costume: they were the most ingenious people of Europe during the middle ages; and their superior skill in the mechanical arts was every where acknowledged. The reader of English history may remember, that in the reign of Richard II. the Earl of Derby, afterwards Henry IV., sent to Milan for his armour, on account of his approaching combat with Thomas, Duke of Norfolk. Sir Galeas, Duke of Milan, not only gave the messenger the best in his collection, but allowed four Milanese armourers to accom-

pany him to England, in order that the Earl might be properly and completely accomplished. The Milanese armour preserved its reputation even in times when other countries had acquired some skill in the mechanical arts. In 1481 the Duke of Brittany purchased various cuirasses at Milan; and in the accounts of jousts and tournaments frequent mention is made of the superior temper and beauty of Italian harness.*

In the south of Italy chivalry had a longer and brighter reign. Some of its customs were introduced by the Lombards when they established their kingdom at Beneventum; and others were planted by the Normans, that people of chivalric adventurousness. Knighthood was an order of the state of high consideration, and much coveted; but its glories were sometimes tarnished by the admission of unworthy members; and, in the year 1252, the Emperor Frederic II. was obliged to issue a decree, at Naples, forbidding any one to receive it who was not of gentle birth.

Chivalry in
the south of
Italy.

The most complete impression, however, of the chivalric character, on the minds of the Italians, was made by the house of Anjou, when Charles and his Frenchmen conquered Naples

* Monstrelet, vol. xi. p. 328.

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in 1266. The south of Italy seems to have been far less advanced in civilisation than the commercial towns of the north; but the Angevine monarchs made Naples one blaze of splendid luxury. Nothing had been seen in Italy so brilliant as the cavalcade of Charles. The golden collars of the French lords, — the surcoats and pennons, and plumed steeds of the knights, — the carriage of the Queen, covered with blue velvet, and ornamented with golden lilies, — surpassed in magnificence all former shows.* The entry of Charles was a festival; and on that occasion the honour of knighthood was conferred on all persons who solicited it. The kings of the house of Anjou pretended to revive the regulations of Frederic II.; but they soon relaxed them, and gave the military girdle to the commonalty who could not prove that their forefathers had been knights.

Curious
circum-
stances at-
tending
knighthood
at Naples.

When a person was invested at Naples, the bishop, or other ecclesiastic who assisted at the inauguration, not only commanded the recipient to defend the church, and regard the usual obligations of chivalry, but he exhorted him not to

* Muratori, Dissert. 23. Muratori describes from a contemporary chronicle the entrance of Charles. The carriage of the Queen seems to have excited great astonishment, as carriages were in those days seldom used by ladies, and seldomer by men.

rise in arms against the King from any motive, or under any circumstances. This curious clause was added to the exhortation: "If you should be disloyal to your sovereign, to him who is going to make you a knight, you ought first to return him the girdle with which you are immediately to be honoured; and then you may make war against him, and none will reproach you with treachery; otherwise, you will be reputed infamous, and worthy of death."

An instance of the fear of this imputation of treachery occurred when the Princes of Besignano and Melfi, the Duke of Atri, and the Count of Maddolini, returned to Louis XII., King of France, the collar of St. Michael, (with which he had honoured them,) when Ferdinand the Catholic took possession of the kingdom.*

Knighthood was much solicited, on account of its privileges, as well as of its titular distinction. It exempted the fortunate wearer from the payment of taxes, and gave him the power of enjoying the royal and noble amusement of the chase. But the Angevine monarchs were so prodigal in granting the honour of knighthood, that it ceased to be a distinction; and in the reign of the last princes of that house the order had degenerated into a vain and empty title.

* Giannone, *Istoria Civile di Napoli*, lib. xx. c. 3. s. 1.

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Mode of
creating
knights in
Italy gene-
rally.

Such was the general state of chivalry in northern and southern Italy; but there were some circumstances common to every part of the peninsula. The nobility invested each other with festive and religious ceremonies, with the bath*, the watching of arms, and the sacred and military shows, or with a simple stroke of a sword, and the exhortation, "Sii un valoroso cavaliere," two ancient knights buckling on his golden spurs. In the year 1294, Azzo, Marquis of Este, was knighted by Gerard, Lord of Camino, at a public solemnity held at Ferrara. Cane, Lord of Verona, in 1328, gave the honour of knighthood to thirty-eight young nobles, and presented them with golden belts, and beautiful war-horses.† In Italy there was the usual array of knights and squires, of cavalieri and scudieri; but I can find no mention of pages distinct from the squires, and attending their lords; except, indeed, they were the domicelli, or donzelli, who, however, are supposed by Muratori to have been the squires of noble rank. All the armour-bearers of the knights were not noble or of gentle birth, or we

* When that political coxcomb, Cola de Rienzi, thought fit to be knighted, he would not bathe in the ordinary way, but made use of the vase wherein, according to tradition, Constantine had been baptised. *Vita di Cola Rienzi*, c. 25.

† Muratori, *Dissert.* 29. 53.

should not very often meet, in the Italian annalists of the middle ages, the expression “honourable squires.”

In the fourteenth century knights had four titles, agreeably to the various modes of their creation:—Cavalieri Bagnati, or Knights of the Bath, who were made with the grandest ceremonies, and supposed, from their immersion, to be freed from all vice and impurity; the Cavalieri di Corredo, or those who were invested with a deep-green dress, and a golden garland; the Cavalieri di Scudo, or those who were created either by people or nobility; and the Cavalieri d’Arme were those who were made either before or during battle. *

Many orders of knighthood were known in Italy: some (but their history is not interesting) were peculiar to it; and others, such as the order of the knights of Saint John and of the Temple, had their preceptories and commanderies in that country. And, to enlarge upon a circumstance alluded to in another place, it is curious to notice the dexterity with which chivalry accommodated itself to the manners and usages of any particular society. The commercial cities in the north of Italy vied in power with, and were superior in wealth to, the feudal nobility. Chivalry was esteemed as a grace-

* Sacchetti, Novelle, c. 153.

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— ful decoration by every class of men, and by none with more ardour than by new families, whom opulence had raised into civic consideration. The strictness of the principles of knighthood opposed their investiture ; but those principles were made to give way ; and commercial pride was satisfied with the concession of aristocratical haughtiness, that the *sons* of men in trade might become brothers of the orders of chivalry.

Political
use of
knighthood.

The decoration of simple knighthood, however, was given indiscriminately without regard to birth or station. Every city assumed the power of bestowing it ; and after a great battle it was showered with indiscriminate profusion upon those who had displayed their courage, whether they were armed burghers or condottieri. And this was a wise measure of the Italian cities : for there was always an obligation expressed or implied on the part of knights of fidelity to the person from whom they received the honour.* It is amusing to observe, that, in the year 1378, a Florentine mob paused in its work of murder and rapine to play with the graceful ensigns of chivalry ; and, in imitation of

* Muratori, Dissert. 53. Thus, when Hildebrand Guasca, in 1260, was made a knight at the expence of the city of Arezzo, he swore fidelity to his lord, or, as grammarians would have it, his lady, the good city that had knighted him.

the power of the city, they insisted on investing their favourites with knighthood.

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Chivalry had, perhaps, greater influence on the literature and manners of the Italians than on their military usages. Wandering minstrels from France and Spain chaunted in the streets of Italy tales of warriors' deeds and lady-love, particularly the stories of Roland and Oliver, the paladins of Charlemagne, who were also the subject of song and recitation, even by the stage-players on the earliest theatre at Milan.* Much of the popular literature of Italy consisted of romances; and the chief topics of them were the exploits both in arms and amours of Charlemagne and his paladins: though on one occasion Buovo d'Antina, a hero of chivalry, who fought and loved prior to the time of those heroes, was the theme of Tuscan verse. The wars of Charlemagne and his paladins with the Saracens were afterwards sung by the nobler muse of Pulci and Boiardo, and then by Ariosto, who, not confining himself to the common stores of romantic fiction, has borrowed as freely from the tales regarding Arthur and the British and Armoric knights as from those relating to Charlemagne and the peers of France, and has thrown over the whole the graceful mantle of Oriental sorcery. The

Chivalric
literature.

* Muratori, Dissert. vol. ii. c. 29. p. 16.

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chivalric duties of converting the heathens, of adoring the ladies, of fighting in the cause of heaven and woman, were thus presented to the minds of the Italians; and the Homer of Ferrara roused the courage, or softened into love or pity, the hearts of knights and ladies, by singing the wars and loves of days which his poetry rendered bright and golden.

These were the literary amusements of Italy; the subjects of recitation in the baronial hall, and of solitary perusal in the lady's bower: with these works the Italians nourished their imaginations; and a chivalric taste was diffused over the manners of public and private life. The amusement of hawking, which, as we have seen, the fathers of chivalric Italy had introduced, was indulged in at every court; and the Ferrarese princes were generally attended in the field by a hundred falconers, so proud and magnificent was their display. Every great event was celebrated by a tournament or a triumphal show. Dante speaks of the tournament as the familiar amusement of the fourteenth century.

Chivalric
sports.

— “e vidi gir gualdane,
Ferir torniamenti, e correr giostra.”

Inferno, c. 22.

So early as the year 1166, on occasion of the interview between Frederic Barbarossa and

Pope Alexander at Venice, chivalric and civic pomp celebrated their friendship. Two centuries afterwards, the recovery of Cyprus presented a fair opportunity for military display. Knights flocked to Venice from England, France, and every country of the West, and manifested their prowess in the elegant, yet perilous, encounter of the tournament. There was a pageant, or grand triumphal show, of a splendid procession of knights cased in steel, and adorned with the favours of the ladies. The scene-painter and the mechanist combined their talents to give an allegorical representation of the Christian's victory over Islamism: the knights moved amidst the scenic decorations, and by their gallant bearing swelled with noble pride the hearts of the spectators.

The sports of chivalry were so elegant and graceful that we might have supposed the refined Italians would have embraced them in all their circumstances. But the arena of the Coliseum, so admirably adapted for a tournament, was used for Moorish games. The matrons and virgins of Rome, arrayed in all their bravery, were seated in its ample galleries, and beheld, not a gallant and hurtless encounter between two parties of knights with lances of courtesy, but a succession of sanguinary conflicts between cavaliers and bulls. Only one solitary circum-

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stance gave an air of chivalry to the scene, and prevents us from mingling the bull-feast of the Coliseum, on the 1st of September, 1332, with the horrid spectacles of classic times. Each knight wore a device, and fancied himself informed by the spirit of chivalry, and the presence of the ladies. “I burn under the ashes,” was the motto of him who had never told his passion. “I adore Lavinia, or Lucretia,” was written on the shield of the knight who wished to be thought the servant of love, and yet dared not avow the real name of his mistress. *

* Muratori, *Scriptores Rerum Italicarum*, vol. xii. p. 535.

CHAP. VII.

ON THE MERITS AND EFFECTS OF CHIVALRY.

WE are now arrived at that part of our subject where we may say with the poet,

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“ The knights are dust,
And their good swords are rust :
Their souls are with the saints, we trust.”

With Italy the historical tracing ceases of that system of principles which for so many centuries formed or influenced the character of Europe. Its rude beginnings may be marked, in the patriarchal manners which preceded every known frame of artificial life, and have been shaped and modified by the legislator and the moralist. The ties of fraternity or companionship in arms, respect to elders, devotion to women, military education and military investiture, were the few and simple elements of chivalry, and in other times would have formed the foundation of other systems of manners. But a new and mighty spirit was now influencing the world, and bending to its purposes every prin-

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ciple and affection. Christianity, with its sanctities and humanities, gave a form and character to chivalry. He who was invested with the military belt was no longer the mere soldier of ambition and rapine, but he was taught to couch his lance for objects of defence and protection, rather than for those of hostility. He was the friend of the distressed, of widows and orphans, and of all who suffered from tyranny and oppression. The doctrine of Christian benevolence, that all who name the name of Christ are brothers, gave beauty and grace to the principles of fraternity, which were the Gothic inheritance of knights, and therefore the wars of the middle ages were distinguished for their humanities. A cavalier was kind and courteous to his prisoner, because he saw in him a brother; and while the system of ancient manners would have limited this feeling to people of one nation, a knight did not bound his humanity by country or soil, for Christian chivalry was spread over most parts of Europe, and formed mankind into one band, one order of men. From the same principle all the courtesies of private life were communicated to strangers; and gentleness of manners, and readiness of service, expanded from a private distinction into an universal character. Since, by the Christian religion, woman was restored to the rank in the moral world which nature

had originally assigned her, the feelings of respect for the sex, which were entertained in the early and unsophisticated state of Europe, were heightened by the new sanctions of piety. It was a principle, as well as a feeling and a love, to guard and cherish woman ; and many of the amenities of chivalry proceeded from her mild influence and example.

The patriarchal system of manners, shaped and sanctioned by Christianity, formed the fabric of chivalry ; and romance, with its many-coloured hues, gave it light and beauty. The early ages of Europe gaily moved in all the wildness and vigour of youth ; imagination freshened and heightened every pleasure ; the world was a vision, and life a dream. The common and palpable value of an object was never looked at, but every thing was viewed in its connection with fancy and sentiment. Prudence and calculation were not suffered to check noble aspirations : army after army traversed countries, and crossed the sea to the Holy Land, reckless of pain or danger : duties were not cautiously regarded with a view to limit the performance of them ; for every principle was not only practised with zeal, but the same fervid wish to do well lent it new obligations. From these feelings proceeded all the graceful refinements, all the romance of chivalry : knighthood itself became

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a pledge for virtue; and as into the proud and lofty imagination of a true cavalier nothing base could enter, he did not hesitate to confide in the word of his brother of chivalry, on his pledging his honour to the performance of any particular action. There was no legal or other positive punishment consequent on the violation of his word; and, therefore, the matter being left to imagination and feeling, the contempt of his fellow-knights could be the only result of recreancy. The knight looked to fame as one of the guerdons of his toils: this value of the opinions of others taught him to dread shame and disgrace; and thus that fine sense of morality, that voluntary submission to its maxims which we call honour, became a part of knighthood.

The genius of chivalry was personal, inasmuch as each knight, when not following the banner of his sovereign, was in himself an independent being, acting from his own sense of virtue, and not deriving counsel from, or sharing opprobrium with, others. This independence of action exalted his character; and, nourished by that pride and energy of soul which belong to man in an early state of society, all the higher and sterner qualities of the mind, — dignity, uncompromising fidelity to obligations, self-denial,

and generousness, both of sentiment and conduct, — became the virtues of chivalry.

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All the religious devotion of a cavalier to woman existed in his mind, independently of, or superadded to, his oath of knighthood. She was not merely the object of his protection, but of his respect and idolatry. His love was the noble homage of strength to beauty. Something supernaturally powerful had been ascribed to her by the fathers of modern Europe ; and this appeal to the imagination was not lost. In some ages and countries it reigned in all its religious force ; in others it was refined into gentleness and courtesy : but every where, and at every time, the firmest confidence in woman's truth accompanied it, or supplied its stead ; and the opinion of her virtue, which this feeling implied, had a corresponding influence on his own manners.

The triumph of chivalry over all preceding systems of opinions was complete, when imagination refined the fierceness of passion into generous and gentle affection, — a refinement so perfect and beautiful, that subsequent times, with all their vaunted improvements in letters and civilisation, are obliged to revert their eyes to the by-gone days of the shield and the lance for the most pleasing and graceful pictures of lady-love.

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From these elements, and by means of these principles, sprang the fair and goodly system of chivalry, which extended itself, as we have seen, over most of the states of Europe, blending with the strongest passions and dearest affections of the heart, influencing the manners of private life, and often determining the character of political events. In England and France its power was most marked and decided ; in Spain it was curiously blended with Oriental feelings ; Germany was not much softened by its impressions ; and in Italy the bitterness of private war admitted but few of its graces. It is difficult to define the precise period of its duration, for it rose in the mists and gloom of barbarism ; and the moment of its setting was not regarded, for other lights were then playing on the moral horizon, and fixing the attention of the world. In the part, entirely historical, of the present work, the reader must have remarked, that sometimes the decay of chivalry was gradual, and not apparently occasioned by external means ; while in other countries its extinction was manifestly hastened by causes which sprang not from any seeds of weakness in itself. But, viewing the subject in its great and leading bearings, it may be observed, that chivalry was coeval with the middle ages of Europe, and that its power ceased when new systems of warfare were ma-

tured, when the revival of letters was complete and general, and the reformation of religion gave a new subject for the passions and imagination.

This attempt to describe a history of chivalry has proved, at least, that chivalry was no dream of poets and romancers, and that the feudal system was not the only form of real life during the middle ages. Sismondi, in his work on the Literature of the South, contends that chivalry was an ideal world. He then admits, that sometimes the virtues of chivalry were not entirely poetical fictions, but that they existed in the minds of the people, without, however, producing any effect on their lives. His reasons for his opinions are, that it is impossible to distinguish the countries where chivalry prevailed; that it is represented to us as remote both in time and place; and while one class of authors give accounts of the general corruption of their age, writers of after times refer to those very days, and adorn them with every virtue and grace.

Now, much of this reasoning is erroneous. That past ages should be praised at the expence of the present is no uncommon a circumstance, whether in morals or poetry. We have proved that the countries where chivalry prevailed are clearly distinguishable, and the degree of its

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influence can likewise be marked. M. Sismondi does not argue as if he had been aware that there ever had existed such a writer as Froissart ; who does not refer to old times for his pictures of arms and amours, but describes the chivalric character of his own age.

Notwithstanding the light and beauty which chivalry cast over the world, the system has been more frequently condemned than praised. The objectors have rested their opinion on a sentence, said to be witty, of an old English author, that errant knights were arrant knaves, or on a few passages of reprehension which are scattered through the works of middle-age literature. Sainte Palaye has founded his condemnation of chivalry upon the remark of Pierre de Blois, a writer of the twelfth century, that the horses of knights groan under the burden, not of weapons, but of wine ; not with lances, but cheeses ; not with swords, but with bottles ; not with spears, but with spits.* Not many years afterwards, John of Salisbury also says, that some knights appear to think that martial glory consists in shining in elegant dress, and attaching their silken garments so tightly to their body, that they may seem part of their flesh. When they

* Non ferro sed vino ; non lanceis sed caseis ; non ensibus sed utribus ; non hastibus sed verubus onerantur.

ride on their ambling palfreys they think themselves so many Apollos. If they should unite for a martial chevisance, their camp will resemble that of Thais, rather than that of Hannibal. Every one is most courageous in the banqueting hall, but in the battle he desires to be last. They would rather shoot their arrows at an enemy than meet him hand to hand. If they return home unwounded, they sing triumphantly of their battles, and declare that a thousand deaths hovered over them. The first places at supper are awarded to them. Their feasts are splendid, and engrossed by self-indulgence: they avoid labour and exercise like a dog or a snake. All the dangers and difficulties of chivalry they resign to those who serve them, and in the mean time they so richly gild their shields, and adorn their camps, that every one of them looks not a scholar but a chieftain of war. *

All this splenetic declamation involves charges of coxcombry, luxury, and cowardice. That knights were often guilty of the first offence is probable enough, for all their minute attention to the form and fashion of armour could not but attach their minds too strongly to the effect of their personal appearance. Graced also with the scarf of his sovereign-mistress, the knight well might

* Polycraticus, p. 181.

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caracole his gallant steed with an air of self-complacency : but a censure on such matters comes with little propriety from monks, who, according to Chaucer, were wont to tie their heads under their chin with a true lover's knot.

The personal indulgence of the knights was not the luxury of the cloister, — idle, gross, and selfish, — but it was the high and rich joviality of gay and ardent souls. They were boon or good companions in the hall, as well as in the battle-field. If their potations were deep, they surely were not dull ; for the wine-cup was crowned and quaffed to the honour of beauty ; and minstrelsy, with its sweetest melodies, threw an air of sentiment over the scene. How long their repasts lasted history has not related : but we have seen, in the life of that great and mighty English knight, Sir Walter Manny, that when the trumpet sounded to horse, cavaliers overthrew, in gay disorder, every festival-appliance, in their impatience to don their harness, and mount their war-steeds ; and we also saw that a cup of rich Gascon wine softened the pride and anger of Sir John Chandos, and, awakening in him the feelings of chivalric generosity, impelled him to succour the Earl of Pembroke. In sooth, at the festivals of cavaliers all the noble feelings of chivalry were displayed. In those

hours of dilatation of the heart, no appeal was made in vain to the principles of knighthood.

Even so late as the year 1462, when the sun of chivalry was nearly set, at a high festival which the Duke of Burgundy gave, at Brussels, to the lords and ladies of the country, two heralds entered the hall, introducing a stranger, who declared that he brought with him letters of credence from the noble lady his mistress. The letters were then delivered by him to the officer of the Duke, who read them aloud. Their purport was, that the lady complained of a certain powerful neighbour, who had threatened to dispossess her of her lands, unless she could find some knight that, within a year, would successfully defend her against him in single combat. The stranger then demanded a boon of the Duke; and His Grace, like a true son of chivalry, accorded it, without previously requiring its nature. The request was, that he should procure for the lady three knights, to be immediately trained to arms; that out of these three the lady should be permitted to choose her champion. Then, and not before, she would disclose her name. As soon as the stranger concluded, a burst of joyful approval rang through the hall. Three knights (and the famous Bastard of Burgundy was of the number) immediately declared themselves candidates for the honour of defending

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the unknown fair. Their prowess was acknowledged by all the cavaliers present, and they affixed their seals to the articles. *

Except the knights were actually engaged in foreign countries, on martial chevisance, all the festivals, particularly those which succeeded the graceful pastime of the tournament, were frequented by dames and damsels, whose presence calling on the knights to discharge the offices of high courtesy, chased away the god of wine. The games of chess and tables, or the dance, succeeded; while the worthy monks, Pierre of Blois, and John of Salisbury, having no such rich delights in their refectory, were compelled to continue their carousals.

How gay and imaginative were the scenes of life when chivalry threw over them her magic robe! At a ball in Naples, Signor Galeazzo of Mantua was honoured with the hand of the Queen Joanna. The dance being concluded, and the Queen reseated on her throne, the gallant knight knelt before her, and, confessing his inability with language adequately to thank her for the honour she had done him, he vowed that he would wander through the world, and perform

* Lansdowne Manuscripts, British Museum, No. 285. Article 41. The manuscript breaks off here; but the result of the joust is of no importance to my argument.

chivalric duties, till he had conquered two cavaliers, whom he would conduct into her presence, and leave at her disposal. The Queen was pleased and flattered by this mark of homage, and assured him that she wished him joy in accomplishing a vow which was so agreeable to the customs of knighthood. The knight travelled, the knight conquered; and, at the end of a year, he presented to the Queen two cavaliers. The Queen received them; but, instead of exercising the power of a conqueror, she graciously gave them their liberty, recommending them, before their departure, to view the curiosities of the rich city of Naples. They did so; and when they appeared before the Queen to thank her for her kindness, she made them many noble presents, and they then departed, seeking adventures, and publishing the munificence and courtesy of Joanna.*

But the charge of cowardice which the monks brought against the knights is the most vain and foolish of all their accusations, and throws a strong shade of contempt and suspicion on the rest. If they had said that chivalric daring often ran wild into rashness, we could readily enough

* Brantome, *Œuvres, les Vies des Dames illustres*, vol. i. p. 410, &c. Brantome relates this story on the authority of an old-Italian book on Duels, written by one Paris de Puteo.

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credit the possibility of the fact ; but nothing could be more absurd than to charge with cowardice men who, from the dauntlessness of their minds, and the hardy firmness of their bodies, had been invested with the military belt.

The reason of all this vituperative declamation against chivalry may be gathered from a very curious passage in a writer during the reign of Stephen. “ The bishops, the bishops themselves, I blush to affirm it, yet not all, but many, (and he particularises the bishops of Winchester, Lincoln, and Chester,) bound in iron, and completely furnished with arms, were accustomed to mount war-horses with the perverters of their country, to participate in their prey ; to expose to bonds and torture the knights whom they took in the chance of war, or whom they met full of money ; and while they themselves were the head and cause of so much wickedness and enormity, they ascribed it to their knights.” * Hence, then, it appears that many of the bishops were robbers, and that they charged their own offences on the heads of the chivalry. The remark of the writer on the cruelty of the bishops to their prisoners is extremely curious, considering it in opposition to the general demeanour of knights to those whom the fortune of war threw

* *Gesta Stephan.* p. 962., cited in *Turner's England*, vol. i. p. 461. 8vo.

into their hands. But these wars and jealousies between the knighthood and the priesthood, while they account for all the accusations which one class were perpetually making against the other, compel us to despise their mutual criminations.

Nothing more, perhaps, need be said to deface the pictures of the knightly character as drawn by Pierre de Blois and John of Salisbury; and they should not have met with so much attention from me if they had not always formed the van of every attack upon chivalry. But there is one passage in Dr. Henry's History of England so closely applicable to the present part of my subject, that I cannot forbear from inserting it. "It would not be safe," observes that judicious historian, "to form our notions of the national character of the people of England from the pictures which are drawn of it by some of the monkish historians. The monk of Malmsbury, in particular, who wrote the life of Edward II., paints his countrymen and contemporaries in the blackest colours. 'What advantage,' says he, 'do we reap from all our modern pride and insolence? In our days the lowest, poorest wretch, who is not worth a halfpenny, despises his superiors, and is not afraid to return them curse for curse. But this, you say, is owing to their rusticity. Let us see, then, the behaviour of

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those who think themselves polite and learned. Where do you meet with more abuse and insolence than at court? There, every one swelling with pride and rancour, scorns to cast a look on his inferiors, disdains his equals, and proudly rivals his superiors. The squire endeavours to outshine the knight, the knight the baron, the baron the earl, the earl the king, in dress and magnificence. Their estates being insufficient to support this extravagance, they have recourse to the most oppressive acts, plundering their neighbours and stripping their dependents almost naked, without sparing even the priests of God. I may be censured for my too great boldness, if I give an ill character of my own countrymen and kindred; but if I may be permitted to speak the truth, the English exceed all other nations in the three vices of pride, perjury, and dishonesty. You will find great numbers of this nation in all the countries washed by the Greek sea; and it is commonly reported that they are infamous over all these countries for their deceitful callings.' But we must remember, (as Dr. Henry comments on this passage,) that this picture was drawn by a *peevish monk*, in very unhappy times, when faction raged with the greatest fury, both in the court and country."

It would not alter the nature of chivalry, or detract any thing from its merits, if many in-

stances were to be adduced of the recreancy of knights, of their want of liberality, courtesy, or any other chivalric qualities ; for nothing is more unjust than to condemn any system for actions which are hostile to its very spirit and principles. One fair way of judging it, is to examine its natural tendencies. A character of mildness must have been formed wherever the principles of chivalry were acknowledged. A great object of the order was protection ; and therefore a kind and gentle regard to the afflictions and misfortunes of others tempered the fierceness of the warrior. In many points chivalry was only a copy of the Christian religion ; and as that religion is divine, and admirably adapted to improve and perfect our moral nature, so the same merit cannot in fairness be denied to any of its forms and modifications. Chivalry embraced much of the beautiful morality of Christianity, — its spirit of kindness and gentleness ; and men were called upon to practise the laws of mercy and humanity by all the ties which can bind the heart and conscience ; by the sanctions of religion, the love of fame, by a powerful and lofty sense of honour. On the other hand, the Christianity of the time was not the pure light of the Gospel, for it breathed war and homicide ; and hence the page of history, faithful to its trust, has sometimes painted the

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knights amidst the gloomy horrors of the crusades ruthlessly trampling on the enemies of the cross, and at other times generously sparing their prostrate Christian foes, and gaily caracoling about the lists of the tournament.

But these are not the only means of showing the general beneficial nature of the institutions of chivalry. The character of modern Europe is the result of the slow and silent growth of ages informed with various and opposite elements. The impress of the Romans is not entirely effaced; and two thousand years have not destroyed all the superstitions of our Pagan ancestors. We must refer to past ages for the origin of many of those features of modern society which distinguish the character of Europe from that of the ancient world, and of the most polished states of Asia. We boast our generousness in battle, the bold display of our animosity, and our hatred of treachery and the secret meditations of revenge. To what cause can these qualities be assigned? Not to any opinions which for the last few hundred years have been infused into our character, for there is no resemblance between those qualities and any such opinions; but they can be traced back to those days of ancient Europe when the knight was quick to strike, and generous to forgive; and when he would present harness and arms to his foe rather

than that the battle should be unfairly and unequally fought. This spirit, though not the form, of the chivalric times has survived to ours, and forms one of our graces and distinctions. The middle ages, as we have shown, were not entirely ages of feudal power ; for the consequence of the personal nobility of chivalry was felt and acknowledged. The qualities of knight-hood tempered and softened all classes of society, and worth was the passport to distinction. Thus chivalry effected more than letters could accomplish in the ancient world ; for it gave rise to the personal merit which in the knight, and in his successor, the gentleman of the present day, checks the pride of birth and the presumption of wealth.

But it is in the polish of modern society that the graces of chivalry are most pleasingly displayed. The knight was charmed into courtesy by the gentle influence of woman, and the air of mildness which she diffused has never died away. While such things exist, can we altogether assent to the opinion of a celebrated author, that “ the age of chivalry is gone ? ” Many of its forms and modes have disappeared ; fixed governments and wise laws have removed the necessity for, and quenched the spirit of, knight-errantry and romance ; and, happily for the world, the torch of religious persecution has long since sunk into

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the ashes. But chivalric imagination still waves its magic wand over us. We love to link our names with the heroic times of Europe ; and our armorial shields and crests confess the pleasing illusions of chivalry. The modern orders of military merit (palpable copies of some of the forms of middle-age distinctions) constitute the cheap defence of nations, and keep alive the personal nobility of knighthood. We wage our wars not with the cruelty of Romans, but with the gallantry of cavaliers ; for the same principle is in influence now which of old inspired courage while it mitigated ferocity. Courtesy of manners, that elegant drapery of chivalry, still robes our social life ; and liberality of sentiment distinguishes the gentleman, as in days of yore it was wont to distinguish the knight.

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THE END.

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